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PERSONALITY AND REALITY

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PERSONALITY AND REALITY

A PROOF OF THE REAL EXISTENCE OF A SUPREME SELF IN THE UNIVERSE

BY

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PREFACE

THE rapid expansion of the physical sciences during the nineteenth century had its inevitable effect upon the previously high estimate of consciousness and personality; and although, during its last decades and the past quarter-century, a marked reaction has occurred in the sphere of philosophy, no analysis of the place and function of mind has to my knowledge yet been presented which maintains conclusions so definite as those offered in the ensuing chapters. On the contrary, the standpoint long since definitely expressed by Westcott is generally accepted unquestioningly. "No arguments", he held, "can establish the existence of an Infinite Personal God. It is a primary intuition and not a deduction. No reasoning can establish its truth." His attitude, I believe, is contrary to that of Roman Catholicism, resting as this does in part at least on the deductions of Scholasticism. But other writers continue to maintain the same negative point of view. "If God is thus a primary datum of our nature", argues a recent author, "it is obvious that His existence cannot in any proper sense of the term be *proved*. It lies at the root of things; it is a postulate, necessary for the explanation of the universe, but not itself explained by being brought under anything higher or more fundamental than itself." [1]

[1] *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, pp. 19, 20, abridged; *Recent Theistic Discussion*, p. 30 (W. L. Davidson). *Cf.* Temple, *Christus Veritas*, p. 174, on the assumption of this principle, and Broad's negative conclusions, *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. xxiv, p. 48.

From the specific standpoint of the scientist, again, Professor E. W. Hobson asserts (in his Gifford Lectures) the strict neutrality of scientific conclusions so far as the theistic issue is concerned. "If no philosophical assumptions are made which lie outside the necessities of Natural Science, the position of Natural Science in relation to theism . . . is one of neutrality or independence." [1] My own position, however, as will be seen from the detailed course of my argument, which must of course be judged on its own merits, is altogether different; for without any appeal to extraneous "philosophical assumptions", it appears to me possible to attain quite positive conclusions.

Allied to this is the widespread impression that the ontological proof of the existence of God received its death-blow from the hand of Kant, although in my own opinion there are already distinct signs in current discussion that Hegel's rehabilitation of this method is capable of further development. This estimate, however, is by no means general. "The three old-fashioned theistic proofs", continues Professor Davidson, "have their use; but it is not that of a logical proof of the Divine existence. They are all attempts (each in its own way) to fill in with content the conception of God, *whose existence is already supposed.*" [2] Equally well known are the philosophic scepticism of the Earl of Balfour, and what may be called the Impersonalism of Mr. Bradley and Dr. Bosanquet.

It is important, however, that the limitations of my

[1] *The Domain of Natural Science*, p. 469.

[2] *Ibid.* It may further be held that the same criticism vitiates Locke's principle that the existence of God is demonstrable by "evidence equal to mathematical certainty" (*Essay*, iv, 10).

own position be observed ; and I have referred to these familiar aspects of the modern situation only to illustrate, by way of contrast, the aim of the present volume. This is in no direct sense theological. I have limited my consideration to the problem of the real existence of a Supreme Self ; but whether this Self should further be regarded as Divine, with any current religious significance, or whether it should be named " God " or any equivalent appellation, are additional questions with which I have not concerned myself ; and I have made no argumentative use of either term. At the same time, some of the theological implications of my conclusion are at once obvious.

Similarly I have neither dealt with the classic ontological arguments nor presented a mere variant of Paley's point of view. On the contrary, my treatment is based throughout on the analysis first of the nature of Mind, and secondly of Matter, solely in the light of modern Psychology and Physics. The facts of Materialism therefore on the one hand, and the principle of Evolution on the other, are unreservedly accepted. Apart from these, indeed, my general argument would possess no basis whatever ; for taken in conjunction, paradoxical though it may seem, they constitute the foundation of my whole position. I may add that a philosophic defence of the real existence of the material world has already been offered in my *Theory of Direct Realism.*[1]

At the same time I should like to observe that the subject was approached with no preliminary bias whatever in favour of my final conclusions, nor again with any view to elaborating some philosophic support for

[1] " The Library of Philosophy " (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.).

a presupposed standpoint. On the contrary, the opening chapters were prepared with not the least suspicion of the direction ultimately taken by the argument. This indeed may literally be said to have developed itself quite independently of my own anticipation and intention ; and if there is such a process, it is the outcome of unconscious cerebration or unconscious intellection.

As on previous occasions, I am indebted to Miss Baddeley and to my son for assistance in preparing the book for publication ; also to the publishers and printers for their accuracy and rapidity during its final stages.

J. E. TURNER.

LIVERPOOL,
November, 1925.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	PREFACE	9
CHAPTER		
I.	THE GENERAL ATTRIBUTES OF REALITY	15
II.	PERSONALITY AS DEFINITE AND PERSISTENT	28
III.	THE BASIS OF THE UNITY OF SELFHOOD	47
IV.	PERSONALITY AND THE REAL WHOLE	61
V.	THE SELF AS A DOMINANT REAL	79
VI.	THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ADVANCING DOMINANCE OF SELFHOOD	92
VII.	MECHANISM AS ESSENTIAL TO THE DOMINANCE OF MIND	113
VIII.	AUTOMATIC MECHANISM AND DESIGN	131
IX.	MECHANISM AND THE SUPREME SELF	146
X.	THE SUPREME SELF AND THE ABSOLUTE	161
XI.	MECHANISM AND BEAUTY. CREATION. FREEDOM	172
	INDEX	189

Personality and Reality

CHAPTER I

THE GENERAL ATTRIBUTES OF REALITY

Definiteness—Complexity—Plasticity—Continuity—Dynamic Activity

1. The problem of personality is perennial. For in being reflective the human mind is also introspective. Its world of investigation includes itself as at once, and at first sight paradoxically, both centre and objective—both observer and observed. Nor can man's attitude to himself be coldly impartial. He cannot but love himself; his love of self, indeed, is the true standard of his love for others; "thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself". But in all directions his world, both without and within, is expanding with bewildering rapidity; and in thus expanding it is at the same time repeatedly transformed. The universe is kaleidoscopic. Some law or principle emerges which promises to organize our knowledge and systematize our fields of enquiry—universal gravitation, universal evolution, the identity of matter and electricity in an Einsteinian finite world; but each alike yields only a new Copernican revolution. Once again a fresh orientation becomes imperative; and with each of these the human self seems to diminish in importance and value, until it appears to be merely a

transient atom with no real significance and no permanent stay in the eternal flux of things.

In the face of this tendency it always remains possible, of course, to narrow our horizons and to limit our interests; to concentrate upon what we find secure and so to live fully in our immediate sphere which, confined though it is, is still real and definite enough for all practical purposes; like passengers on an ocean liner who neither know nor care about its final destination, and yet find sufficient to absorb all their energies. But such an attitude, reasonable and sane though it often appears, never has contented and never can content the spirit of man. He is not passenger, but captain; and will voyage onward even though he sails—blindly it may be, yet still bravely—no enclosed calm sea but an infinity of ocean.

But is he really blind? or can he learn something that is final and certain about himself and his place in the infinite whole? No satisfactory answer to this question is possible, I think, apart from a general survey of our entire present-day knowledge of the universe. But a survey only; for any attempt to consider its exhaustless detail is a patent impossibility. We can, nevertheless, discern certain definite tendencies—basal principles—foundational laws—that illuminate and interpret the baffling intricacy of the phenomena themselves.

For in the first place, the complete understanding of any object or event always makes a dual demand on our method of investigation. This must take two directions; it must be directed first upon the nature or internal structure of the object of our enquiry, and secondly on its relations to the rest of reality; or, as

this is more generally expressed, to its "environment". Further, it is to a certain degree not only possible, but actually necessary, to separate these two spheres of examination and to pursue each independently—to concentrate upon the given object of investigation to the exclusion of all else, except it may be others of the same type as itself, or, on the other hand, to take this object in its entirety and observe its typical reactions with others. This twofold attitude is possible with both simple and complex entities. The geometer *e.g.* may either tabulate the distinctive properties of a given triangle—the dimensions of its angles and their relations to the sides—or he may express its connections with other figures external or internal to itself; and similarly, but at the other extreme of the scale of intricacy, the biologist and sociologist study both the internal structure, and the outwardly directed activities, of living beings and of societies.

The implications of this essential duality are extremely important. It is in the first place obvious that, for complete knowledge, the results of both of these distinct methods are requisite. For the first inevitably tends to restrict the full reality of the given field of enquiry in two ways; it isolates this field from the entire system of changes and processes within which it was originally discerned, and it also tends to petrify or stagnate it into a static structure rather than a dynamic organization. It is true, of course, that every object—every system—has a certain static aspect, insofar as it exhibits a definite and more or less permanently ordered internal constitution; and when, once again, we are dealing with entities of relatively extreme simplicity, such as geometrical figures or elementary physical bodies, this static aspect

appears to constitute their predominant, if not indeed their sole, characteristic. But this is simply the result —it may almost be called the penalty—of cutting these objects away from the actual world in which they really exist so as to erect them into a more or less artificial world of their own. Certainly, if their nature is to be completely investigated, this isolation must be brought about; nonetheless are many vital connections severed, with the result that certain subordinate features at once assume an undue prominence. To borrow a theatrical simile, it is as though the spot-light were focussed always on a single actor in the entire cast—his monopoly of the stage then necessitating the distortion of the drama as a whole.

But as we advance from such simple entities as those just referred to to others more complex, both the isolation and the fixity of structure inevitably tend to disappear. The first of these characteristics, indeed, rapidly vanishes even in geometry and its allied fields of enquiry; for all the more intricate figures and problems are obviously based on interconnections which unite together a large number of simpler instances. And when, still further, these mathematical principles are applied to processes which go on in time, their original abstract static character is ultimately replaced by a dynamic activity, until finally an immense sphere of protracted physical changes may be expressed in formulæ such as those of Einstein's theory. It is again necessary to observe, however, that these expressions could never have been discovered apart from the indispensable preliminary analysis of simpler and more abstract phenomena.

And when we turn to the actual world of nature and of history these principles become still more obvious.

A plant—an animal—a social group—each of these undoubtedly has a certain more or less definite structure; for even social groups become better fitted to fulfil their functions or to achieve their purposes by acquiring some well marked constitution, as in the case of the justiciary or legislative assemblies. It is indeed frequently argued that all such institutions, simply because they are institutions, show an inherent tendency to take on too rigid an organization and so become archaic; and this criticism rests on a sound foundation. For it implies the fundamental principle that all definite organization, merely as organization, is really subordinate and instrumental. It should always subserve the efficient carrying out of some active process, the achievement of some end or goal; and insofar as it fails to do this it belies its own nature and contradicts its own being. But this unavoidable introduction of process—end—purpose—at once carries us from the sphere of the static to that of the dynamic; and this again of itself destroys all isolation and separation, uniting all things into inclusive combinations within which they react to one another by means of that specific character which makes each what it is.[1]

I have just described this "specific character" as "more or less definite"; and this qualification might be taken at first sight to mean that the higher we rise in the scale of importance and value the less definite must become the nature of the entities with which we have to deal. Such an impression, widespread though

[1] *Cf.* further on the dynamic and the static, my *Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation*, pp. 105 *sqq.*; also Emerson's dictum in *English Traits*: "Science isolates the reptile or the mollusc it strives to explain; whilst reptile or mollusc only exists in system, in relation".

it unfortunately is, is radically mistaken; it is due simply to our inability clearly to comprehend the complete detail of any given situation; and this failure, again, is the natural result of its high degree of complexity on the one hand, and the inadequacy of our methods of analysis on the other. We are too often inclined to say *e.g.* that the character of a great statesman or artist is not "definite", meaning by this that it would be presumptuous on our part to endeavour to foretell his way of dealing with some critical situation or difficult æsthetic problem; and this of course is quite true. But it must be observed that we adopt precisely the same attitude towards certain merely physical phenomena —towards the weather and the tides. In general, these also are not "definite", in the sense that we cannot accurately predict their changes. But we clearly recognize that this inability is simply the natural consequence of insufficient detailed information relatively to the extreme intricacy of the processes in question; and as soon, on the other hand, as our methods of analysis become adequate to unravel their complications they at once become exactly predictable, as is now done by tidal machines.[1] But exactly the same is true, in principle, of artist or statesman. In their cases also there really exists a high degree of true definiteness of nature or personality; and frequently this characteristic becomes unmistakably visible to the discerning eye, as when a picture or a poem bears the stamp of its creator in every single detail, or a Napoleon or Lincoln sets his indelible seal on a country's destiny. The truth is that in all these cases alike we find an unquestionable definiteness

[1] The comptometer and other mechanical calculating contrivances are analogous instances.

united (first) with an extremely high degree of complexity of structure and (secondly) with an equally marked plasticity of response to the environment; although it is still truer to say that this complexity and plasticity are not two independent and separable qualities, but are rather two distinct aspects of one and the same organic whole. It is this extreme complexity—just as in the case of weather changes—that always defies our analysis; while the plasticity, in virtue of which its possessor is enabled adequately to react to the incessant variations of circumstance, compels us to describe the allied definiteness as "more or less"—that is as elastic, as capable of effectively adapting itself to the necessities of different situations; and these characteristics are plainly universal.

2. Thus the first general character of the universe is its *definiteness of structure* or of organization. This is present everywhere and always, although in very different degrees of intricate complexity; and it is this complexity—never, as is too often supposed, the complete absence of definiteness—that renders our investigation of the nature of reality so supremely difficult. It may be objected that its universality has never been—indeed never can be—logically demonstrated, since to do this demands an exhaustive knowledge of the whole nature of things, while our actual knowledge is not only extremely fragmentary, but is to a great extent haphazard and fortuitous. This is obviously true; and yet it is this very feature of our knowledge, which seems at first sight to be so fatal a defect, that really provides the weightiest proof of the principle of universal organization. For if our examination of reality had been

systematically confined to only one of its main subdivisions—let us suppose to the realm of matter as known to physics—and if in that particular sphere definiteness of structure had been discovered without any exception, then it would be possible to argue that this definiteness was characteristic of the material world only, while elsewhere it might be absent. But it is this very fortuitousness of all scientific experiment, penetrating as it does without any single main governing ideal of method [1] into any and every kind of phenomena, and discovering in every instance, without exception, accidental though its investigation frequently is, the same typical ordered arrangement, that constitutes the strongest possible evidence of the universality of that order. For it implies—and implies more and more forcibly the longer such investigation proceeds—that no matter where or when reality may be analysed, it will be found to be systematically constructed; its processes therefore are never chaotic but always characterized by order and law. An illustration may be helpful here. If a gambler were to go from table to table at Monte Carlo, and were to place his stakes here and there purely at random, and if in spite of this complete lack of system he continued to win, and sometimes won very substantially, then we should be driven to conclude that his uninterrupted gains really occurred in accordance with some unvarying law which determined the outcome of his throws, fortuitous though these actually were so far as he himself was concerned.

[1] I do not mean of course that science wholly lacks its directing principles of method. Each science employs its own, and does so successfully. Still the general conditions resemble the allied operations during the greater part of the war—each nation acting largely independently, without unity of command.

At Monte Carlo, of course, this could never happen; and yet it is highly significant that something closely resembling it is always going on in the course of scientific discovery. For this, in a sense, is a gamble with Nature; every available opportunity is taken advantage of, and every one yields, in the long run, some degree of further insight into natural order. Our grounds for regarding this order as being universal, therefore, are the most forcible that can be imagined under the actual conditions of human experience; and this conclusion is supported by still another feature of the situation—by the rapidly increasing interconnections between the results of investigation in the different sciences themselves, together with the light which any one science throws upon the others. The more our knowledge expands, in short, the more does it attain a true unity—a single wholeness—every aspect of which finds some support and further elucidation elsewhere; and this, once again it is essential to observe, without any prior search for such interrelation on the part of the investigators themselves; it is rather the unfailing outcome of all research, no matter what direction this happens to take. The content or object of every science, and similarly of every culture which, though perhaps not completely identical with science, still resembles this in its attitude and method,[1] is one and the same—the ordered structure of reality, infinitely various in type though this is both in itself and in its demands upon our modes of enquiry. The increasing unity of human knowledge is thus founded ultimately in the unity of the world; so that it is impossible to demarcate one science or culture absolutely from all others, because its

[1] Such as Anthropology, Economics, or History.

own peculiar subject matter is essentially connected with that of its allies."

3. But at the same time this basal interconnection underlies a vast range of differences of *complexity* in the principal types of reality; and it is this varying complexity that determines the nature of the methods that are characteristic of any given culture or science—whether *e.g.* this is in the main purely rational, or observational and experimental—whether inductive or deductive—statistical or hypothetical—analytic or synthetic. In actual practice, of course, all these contrasted methods are used in combination as the circumstances demand; nonetheless is some one type, in general, more applicable to a given class of phenomena than any of the others; and this special applicability turns, at bottom, on the degree of the complexity of the phenomena in question, ranging as this does from the relatively simple abstractions of the mathematician to the long and intricate field of enquiry of the historian.

The foregoing principle of the definite structure of reality, then, implies neither simplicity nor rigidity; and when we recognize the further truth that all the simple elements of the world are essentially dynamic, it becomes possible to discern the logical consequence of all increased complexity of structure—that is the inherent *plasticity* of all the higher forms of organization. For every electron is a nucleus of incessant activity—the intensity of intra-atomic energy has now become a commonplace. But further, the specific properties of the various chemical elements differ very widely. It must follow, therefore, that when a large number of these elements becomes combined in one stable unit, as

in the molecules of organic and vital substances, two consequences inevitably ensue. These molecules, and still more the various bodily organs which they form, are in the first place capable of a wide range of diverse reactions to environmental stimuli; secondly, the wider this responsive range becomes, the more extensive is the external sphere to which these complex combinations are sensitive—the wider, in other terms, is the environment to which they specifically respond; and thus the plasticity of the various types of reals becomes intimately correlated with the extent and diversity of the external sphere of reality to which they react. Conversely again, every real itself forms part of some environment; so that the primary character of universal *definiteness of structure* is invariably associated with the further attributes of *complexity of organization* and *plasticity of response*, the degree of each of these inherent attributes rising and falling with that of the others.[1]

But when, to carry my argument still a stage farther, these are regarded as universally characteristic of reality they are at once seen to imply an *unbroken continuity*; and this, from a somewhat different point of view, is likewise evidenced by that advancing interconnectedness of all our knowledge, cultural and scientific alike, which has already been referred to. This uninterrupted approach of all the various departments to each other, and the elucidation which each constantly finds elsewhere, spring from an underlying continuity in the nature of the distinct spheres of investigation; their distinction therefore is never a separation, but is merely the index of the different modes in which the characters

[1] *Cf. Moral Obligation*, chap. xi, for a more detailed treatment of these points.

of definiteness, complexity and plasticity are variously combined; and between all these modes of their combination there exists an uninterrupted transition, with the sole possible exception of the advance from unconsciousness to mind; and even this, in my own opinion, is the natural outcome of an extreme delicacy of intricate nervous organization with its resultant sensitiveness. This however does not mean that mind can in any way be reduced to matter or matter translated into mind; each of these entities, in accord with the reality of the world's fundamental distinctions, remains what it is.

Finally, this underlying continuity implies that there exists throughout all reality an incessant *dynamic activity*.[1] We have seen that this is true of even the ultimate electronic elements of the material world; for each is the focus of a field of energy, and so a part of the universe of energy. It is a wholly inadequate expression of this principle to say merely that reality is a flux, a process, a series of incessant changes. This is certainly true, but it is altogether insufficient. We must add further that the process is a *directed* process—a universal tendency which passes, stage by stage, from an origin to a goal; and if we ask by what agency this process is in the end directed, the only ultimate answer is that it is *self*-directed. For it is always and throughout the activity of the real Whole, which must thus contain its source within itself, since there can exist nothing beyond itself which can be its origin. Again, to place the entire emphasis upon the changing process, simply as such, is to ignore that inherent definite structure of all the constituent reals of the Whole which I have already insisted upon. For as I have pointed out, the

[1] *Cf.* further p. 48 below.

static aspect that can so often be discerned in the different systems of Being is fully real—*as* an aspect; it becomes unreal only when it is taken to exclude that still more fundamental dynamic activity which, as its own basis or ground, the static itself exists to maintain. All change thus proceeds upon, or through, a multitude of persistent reals. Distinct both from their fellows and from their environment, these reals are yet one with them in virtue of their sensitivity and reactions; and so far as this truth is ignored we obtain a merely pluralistic world in place of a true universe. Distinction and persistence, therefore, possess an unquestionable status and value in the scheme of things. The objects of the everyday world, the selves of ordinary social intercourse, are exactly what they are, and even, though not so exactly, what they seem to be. They need not necessarily deliquesce into some vague or undefined matrix; for even in advancing or evolving, on the contrary, they remain themselves, distinguishable and persistent in spite of their incessant partial transformation.

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CHAPTER II

PERSONALITY AS DEFINITE AND PERSISTENT

1. The foregoing analysis of the nature of Reality must now be considered in its bearing upon personality; and that the human self possesses certain of the general characters of all reals is obvious. Complexity, plasticity and activity are manifestly its inherent attributes; but that the self is actually persistent and definite has again and again been disputed. Hume's philosophic standpoint with regard to this question is too well known to need detailed discussion; and so far as they go, Hume's facts are unquestionable; only, as Kant proceeded to show, he omitted the most important facts of all, and so based his sceptical conclusions on altogether too narrow a basis. Hume's fundamental error throughout his consideration of his problem was the simple and common one of failing to see the wood because of the trees; his obsession with the complex detailed structure of selfhood prevented him perceiving the unitary system which these very details themselves constituted. Certainly each and all of them are nothing more than transient existents when they are considered, from the purely analytic standpoint, simply as elemental factors; and Hume's arguments still hold good against all theories of the self such as were current in his own day—as a being or substance which in some inexplicable way transcended the totality of

its content. And yet the physical basis of personality —the human body—might itself have served him as an example of persistence inseparably connected with transence—of the coming into being and the passing away of every one of its constituents, combined however with the patent enduring of the bodily system *as* a system or organized totality. But still further, it is essential to observe that this enduring system is enabled to function responsively to its environment only by this unceasing change of its own constituent parts; for apart from this incessant renewal of all the bodily factors the continuance of life would be an impossibility. Exactly the same holds true of the psychic elements of personality; indeed, in so far as mental changes are associated with nervous changes, exactly the same must be true. In both cases alike—equally with respect to the body and to the mind —the totality that is formed by the combination of the innumerable and diverse factors, transient though many of these are, is a persistent *system*—persistent, that is, so long as the combination in question retains its normal constitution; and it is this system, again *as* a system, that is the self, or person, or individual.

At this point however it is vitally important to observe that this system is essentially a system of psychic *activities*, never of merely passive constituents. Too often this has been altogether overlooked even in modern psychological analysis, with the result that consciousness has then been regarded as a combination of ideas, feelings, memories and purposes each of which in itself is static even though, in arising and disappearing, they form an incessantly changing whole. This description, while quite correct in its detail, is nevertheless radically inadequate as a final account of the self. For the elements

just referred to constitute only the psychic materials which the self handles or manipulates, although in so doing it may make them an integral part of itself. But personality is still more fundamentally constituted by its active manipulation of these materials—by the psychic processes of remembering, perceiving, thinking, willing, purposing, imagining, *etc.*[1] It is these activities, rather than the variety of contents with which they deal,[2] that form the actual self, although at the same time it must not be supposed that such activities can ever be absolutely separated from some content or other. For taken purely in themselves they cannot exist ; each is a function which cannot operate in a vacuum, but must always have its equivalent psychic material wherewith to deal. This, of course, is no mere abstract principle of psychology or philosophy, but simply a universally obvious truth ; and just as no merchant can engage in buying and selling, purely as such, apart from some article which is bought and sold, and as no author can merely write without writing something or other, so no self can think or remember without directing these processes upon some more or less definite content or another—some actual concept or memory. It may be said that all this is too obvious to need stating ; nevertheless it has been far too often ignored in recent epistemology and psychology, with the result that many of their most important issues have been radically distorted.[3] But

[1] It may be observed that the common suffix " ing " indicates their nature as processes.

[2] That is, in psychological terms, the percepts, concepts, images and thoughts which occupy or fill the mind.

[3] To discuss these in detail would form altogether too great a digression. I may refer to the opening chapters of my *Theory of Direct Realism* (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.).

once this standpoint is assumed it is easy to perceive its vital implications. For it is plain that while what I have just called the materials wherewith these functions deal—that is the memories and thoughts *etc.*—unceasingly appear and disappear, the active processes themselves of thinking and willing *etc.*, continue unchanged *as* processes, and indeed must so continue if there are to be any memories or thoughts at all; these cannot exist apart from the relevant psychic activity any more (once again) than pictures and statues can come into being without the processes of painting and sculpture. All this is plainly true of ordinary individuals; but when we consider any long and sustained process of creative activity, such as the production of *Paradise Lost*, the *Divina Commedia*, or any great symphony or drama, the permanence of the psychical function, which despite all its interruptions, retains its continuity, becomes perfectly obvious.

Still further however, such artistic creation constitutes not only a persistent, but equally an extremely complex function, as competent psychological analysis at once reveals;[1] it is no mere simple process, but a compound (to mention no others) of imagination, memory, thought, profound emotion and stern volition; the maintenance of great ideals before the mind and the intense struggle to attain and realize these ideals. Now it is just this intricate combination of active processes or functions, widely different as between themselves yet at the same time fused together into a single unity, that constitutes any given self—Milton, Dante or Beethoven on the one

[1] Precisely the same principle, as I have just suggested, underlies the more commonplace instances of business enterprise or political strategy.

hand or Tom, Dick and Harry on the other. The difference here is not one of principle, but only of the level of personality attained or attainable; and Tom may after all be a "village Hampden" or "mute inglorious Milton". Modern fiction, indeed, reveals innumerable characters which, while socially obscure, are still quite definite and highly complex, being of course no merely artificial products of their creators' imagination but based on actual humanity.

In this sense therefore selfhood exists as at once complex, definite and persistent. It was (to repeat) this aspect of the situation that was ignored by Hume, who overlooked, in his concentration on the details of experience, the unity which those details themselves constituted, so that while he gave a most valuable analysis of personality he forgot the essential truth that every analysis, in order to be such, demands a prior synthesis on which to operate. Selfhood then must be conceived as a complex unity of psychic or mental activities which are sustained through long intervals; the pursuit of certain ideals, the search for some goal or result, even the more passive longing for some state or condition, systematically maintained over long periods of time and in face of serious obstacles. It matters not, at this stage of our enquiry, whether these ends are low or high, material or spiritual, moral or immoral, although these questions must inevitably arise later; nor is the principle here involved invalidated by its applicability to lower types of consciousness. For the animal mind is quite similarly held together in a single unity; only it is so consolidated by a psychic agency which is external to and unrecognized by the individual animal itself—that is by instinct. In true selfhood, on the contrary,

this unification is always to some degree no longer external but internal; it becomes not only more or less clearly cognized by the given person himself, but also, in the higher types of personality, directed and influenced by himself. In more ordinary instances, on the contrary, selfhood approximates to the unthinking unity of animals; whether it is "instinctive" or not depends on our definition of "instinct"; but disregarding this debatable point, average personalities are obviously the victims of habit, convention, fashion and tradition; passively resigned therefore to influences outside themselves instead of actively dominating these so as to make them instruments to the furtherance of higher ends, as great men always do; and this, of course, is only the natural consequence of the slow evolution of man from the animal level.

It may still be urged however that we require a theory or description not of selfhood but of the self. To adopt this standpoint appears to me to run the risk of setting up a false distinction between self and selfhood—that is of regarding a self as some entity that is altogether separate from selfhood as hitherto defined, and so of postulating that transcendent being against which Hume's criticism was so effectively directed. On the other hand, of course, we must avoid dealing with the subject in purely general and abstract terms; and this involves the recognition that selfhood always assumes some concrete form—always appears as a unity which has more or less[1] definite relations both internally and externally, in exactly the same way that certain salts always assume the same crystalline forms which in their case, however, are *absolutely* definite so that there is no plasticity whatever. The self then can be described or defined only in terms of

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 19 on "more or less".

selfhood; but in this of course there is nothing exceptional or illogical, for it is but the application of the general principle that every real entity can be known only through its qualities—can be apprehended only in terms of those attributes of which it is one particular combination and which it manifests in some one definite way. In this sense therefore it is not a mere tautology to say that the self is that which has selfhood—it is a real existent which exerts, in some one out of an endless diversity of forms, that complex unity of psychic activities already dealt with. The self is persistent and continuous because these its activities are persistent and continuous; and in this sense, but in this sense only, it may be called the "centre", or "focus", or even the "sum" of these dynamic attributes.[1] If this is what is meant by urging that the self is essentially "different from" selfhood, or is "other than" its active qualities, I should fully agree.[2] The fundamental point is to avoid the conception of some sort of entity wholly separable from, and so transcending, these qualities; existing therefore altogether independently of the manifestation of activities which, however much they differ in detail, nevertheless remain of the same order as those here considered. The tendency towards so doing, it seems to me, is powerfully reinforced by the patent and almost absolute contrast between the physical body of a person and his psychic activity. The first is quite definite and apparently unchanging; the second invisible and intangible, and so far as it can be traced at all incessantly fluctuating.

[1] *Cf.* further below, chap. iii. sect. 5.

[2] *Cf.* Dr. McTaggart, *Hegelian Cosmology*, pp. 36, 37: "The self is a substance existing in its own right. . . . Substance is nothing apart from its attributes . . . each self a self-subsistent substance, though not an isolated one".

Inevitably therefore the belief is generated in a self that is in the same way different from and apparently independent of psychical activities—a standpoint reflected in all primitive ghost-theories of the soul and their later refinements into its identification with breath or astral body. To this it need only be added that, so far as the general problem is concerned, the same issue arises with regard to Matter and its attributes.[1]

From the same point of view this system, in being permanent, manifests a true definiteness of structure—or if it is preferred, it may once again be described as "more or less definite". But this qualification means not any loss of definiteness, but simply a union of definiteness with plasticity; a dual characteristic which is clearly perceived in every great symphony as this passes through all its possible *nuances* of musical expression, and so achieves the finest utterance of its creator's mood or of some deep and eternal human passion; and of this general principle the bodily organism again affords a visible example. It is plainly true, as Hume himself insisted, that now one group of psychic entities and now another can be introspectively discerned, but never any persistent group that remains always one and the same—no absolutely unchanging, substantial or transcendent "self". But this indubitable fact is only another manifestation of the essential plasticity of personality, and it is exactly paralleled both by the orchestra which performs the symphony and by the human body. Not all the instruments of the former, nor all the organs of the latter, are always at the height of their activity; nevertheless the symphony remains a distinct composition[2] just as

[1] *Cf.* my *Theory of Direct Realism*, chap. xvii, sect. 7.

[2] Its varying presentation by different conductors might also be cited here.

the body remains distinct and complete. This conclusion certainly raises the difficult problem, in view of its incessant fluctuations, of the nature of the "real" self; but it also indicates that the final solution is to be attained not by any process of the reduction of personality to the lowest possible level, nor of its analysis into wholly separate factors, but rather by the summation of all its observable aspects into a comprehensive system, which manifests now one of its inherent phases and now another in response to the changes in its environment. We must more fully recognize, in short, the extreme complexity of selfhood, which again implies that the description of the "real" self must necessarily be an essentially difficult matter. But on the other hand, we must guard against the fatal delusion that because the real self can be discerned only with great difficulty therefore no real self whatever actually exists.

2. Thus the general belief that the personality of each of us is in some way or other a definite and persistent entity proves to have some measure of justification. This belief, plainly, is never a purely intellectual conviction arrived at by process of argument, but is originally little more than a vague yet nonetheless firmly fixed feeling pragmatically based on concrete experience. We find that we can actually recognize our selves through all the varying circumstances of life just as we can recognize our fellows; while whenever there occurs some disturbance of general organic sensation we commonly say we feel we are "not ourselves"—a frequent symptom, indeed, of oncoming mental disorder. But I am not here appealing to these obvious facts as evidence for the principle in question; on the contrary I am simply

pointing out that our ordinary unreflective attitude cannot be summarily dismissed as totally unfounded. For although it certainly disregards all theoretical difficulties, still it finds some support in the preceding theory of selfhood as constituting one type of real.

The inherent definiteness of the self, however, is perhaps not so easily perceived as its persistence; but it is obvious that if it were almost wholly indefinite it could not be said really to persist at all, any more than a summer cloud or breaking wave. Nevertheless it is clear that every adult personality, and even every child, is distinguished by certain peculiarities—by idiosyncracies, tastes, habits, *etc.*—which when taken as a whole give it an unchanging character, and at the same time determine its reaction to any given set of conditions, to such a degree that this characteristic reaction can often be correctly anticipated. Every great novel and tragedy, again, depend for their interest on the analysis of such definite characters, and the presentation of their response to critical circumstance; and here it is highly instructive to notice that all the greatest masters of fiction and the drama can confer this interesting and unmistakable definiteness upon individuals who would in actual life be quite unimportant. In this respect Dickens and Shakespeare are, I suppose, the two outstanding instances; and again the essential point is that, in spite of the frequent triviality of their characters' peculiar traits when taken by themselves alone, they are nevertheless capable as soon as they are incorporated within those unified systems which only genius can create, of endowing these with permanent definiteness; and while few people attain the eminence of a Lincoln or a Napoleon still each of us, in precisely the same way, though not on the

same level nor to the same degree, plays some definite part on the stage of life.

The precise character of this inherent definiteness, further, illustrates a general principle which is of fundamental importance. For it is obvious that it never implies rigidity or fixity, but rather that high degree of plasticity which, as I have argued in the preceding chapter, is the indelible mark of all complexly organized reals. This inherent complexity, however, is much too frequently altogether lost sight of, especially when it becomes so extreme that only a highly trained observer can detect its full detail; and it then becomes ignored in this way first of all because the details themselves are often very minute and delicate, but secondly for the still more important reason that in every organized system which is capable of persisting for any appreciable time these multitudinous factors must co-operate or become merged—though not confused—with each other to such an extent that the individuality of each contributes to the nature of the system as a whole. The result is that the whole thus becomes greater than the parts not merely quantitatively, but also in the sense that it is dominant while they remain subordinate; and the inevitable consequence is that it is the whole which absorbs our attention while its foundational details are ignored; perhaps a few specific instances will make this a little clearer.

Whenever for example we mistake the identity of a friend or a building, and then correct our error, we generally find it somewhat difficult to say precisely what it is that has revealed this to us; and similarly, it is rarely easy to say on the spur of the moment just what are the delicate but essential features which distinguish some

curious character in a novel or a play. It is true that we find on reflection that some particular trait has given us the clue; but most frequently this occurs quite subconsciously. It is rather the *tout ensemble* that has actually been before the mind, and the automatic comparison on which our recognition is based has been concerned with this rather than with its specific details as such.

In this way therefore we acquire an impression of simplicity and fixity which is too apt to be radically misunderstood, and so is to that degree a false impression. Regarded subjectively, in other words, or when taken purely *as* an impression and nothing more, this simplicity undoubtedly exists and is in that sense real; but insofar as its true nature fails to be apprehended it remains an illusion; and when this error affects the objective standpoint of the investigator it becomes a highly mischievous illusion. For it continually tends fundamentally to distort—and in the history of thought it has repeatedly thus distorted—our concepts of the nature of reality. It has led many thinkers to regard all true reals as being simple, and therefore in the end, when contrasted with the chaotic intricacy of concrete experience, as being abstract—remote, transcendent; and allied with this error is the too general belief that the Platonic Idea—the soul—God—Life—Mind—is something elemental, and so to be readily discerned and easily understood [1] if some magical "open sesame" could only be discovered. In another direction, again, this mistaken attitude lies at the root of every attempt to find ultimate reality in the simplest constituents of the universe—in

[1] I do not mean that this may not be in some sense true from the distinctively religious standpoint.

matter and motion, in molecules and electrons. All these have of course their own true reality; but it does not follow that because they are elementary theirs is the fundamental reality; it is, on the contrary, only one type of the real.

For reality, in accordance with my earlier argument, is everywhere complex. Even the structure of the atom itself is so intricate that most of its processes baffle modern mathematical analysis, although this will doubtless some day prove adequate to its task. Nevertheless this complexity, merely in itself, cannot constitute our final concept; for it is always allied with definiteness and with plasticity. It is everywhere, in short, an *organized* complexity, wherein every minute detail finds its proper place and function within some containing whole which dominates them all in such a way, as I have just remarked, that it is most frequently the whole, and not its constituent factors, that seems to us to be at once simple and real. But it should now be obvious that such a whole can never be completely understood until not only all its elements have been discovered and examined but, further, until the laws which govern their changing interrelations have also been elucidated; and this constitutes the task of every type of analytical investigation, whether mathematical, historic or critical.

3. Thus the "simplicity" which we so often observe is in actuality a compound effect—the resultant of a very large and diversified group of co-operant factors; and the definiteness of the apparently "simple" whole, it is again important to notice, springs always from the high precision of every one of these factors, together with the exact adjustment of their mutual relations;

so far as these fall below the proper degree, just so far does the final definiteness suffer. This, in the first place, is a definiteness of *structure*. But, in accordance with the references in my first chapter to the *dynamic* nature of all reality, it is equally a definiteness of *function*. For function, in the end, always depends directly and indissolubly upon structure; whenever the latter is in any way affected, so is the former, as is obvious from the consideration of any delicate modern machine or the activity of the living organism. The principle here involved, however, is universally true, and may indeed be still more clearly apprehended in all its aspects in its application to the great products of fine art. For all these creations, in the first place, constitute wholes of such a kind that, while they forcibly affect us, they at the same time give the impression of being perfectly simple —which, indeed, in a sense they are; every great tragedy, or poem, or picture, or building is an instance of this. And yet it becomes equally obvious, once our attention is drawn to the fact, that this "simple" totality is really the outcome of an enormous mass of absolutely precise details and exact interrelations, so precise, indeed, that to alter it in any measure is to mar the entire effect. The intricate carving on a fine roof, the emotional exclamations, even the stage directions, in a drama,[1] the irregularities of poetic rhythm, all the lights and curves in a picture—each of these must have at once its due proportions and its fit place in the entire scheme. To confer these qualities is the high prerogative of genius; while even their full appreciation equally demands, in addition to keen sensibility, critical acumen of the highest

[1] "A chorus-ending from Euripides."
"Enter Lady Macbeth, with a taper."

order. Their divorce, on the contrary, results either in the careless efforts of innate genius that will not properly cultivate its truest powers, or in an excellence of pure *technique* whose perfection of detail lacks the balancing influence of emotion or inspiration. For it must further be recognized that these objective characters of fine art always express the subjective moods of some great mind. It may be tautologous, but it is not superfluous, to insist that art demands an artist. In other words, art comes into existence only as the outward expression of the inner content of some mind ; and this content is predominantly emotional, although it is never exclusively so, but rather necessitates a high capacity for intellectual expression, as is at once obvious in great poetry ; but it should be equally clear, in my opinion, in music and architecture ; and if this is true, the further transition to all other branches of art presents no difficulty. This profound emotional generating impulse is itself, again, extremely complex, as every student of psychology knows to his cost ; but at the same time it is so overwhelming, and its component elements are so intimately fused together, that it always operates as a unitary —and therefore apparently simple—whole. And when this impulse is absent there must necessarily follow a lack of wholeness in the artistic product, which becomes expressionless simply because there is nothing to be expressed. Detail, as detail, may then be perfect ; but it can yield no more than a shallow *technique*—the skilful contortions of the acrobatic mind, the fashion of a day rather than the heritage of generations.

This general principle is not affected by the fact that the originative mind frequently expresses a mood which arises quite spontaneously, and in a manner over which,

at least to begin with, it has little control, although it may bestow the greatest care upon its fuller development. Artistic creativeness, in other words, is often subconscious rather than deliberate; but this really means that the mind is merely responsive to an extremely intricate mass of stimuli, subjective and objective, external and internal, that affects it irresistibly. Nonetheless it must be a *mind* that, in every expression of its psychic content, gives this the various forms of art; in other words, it is only through the medium of some mind that these can ever come into being, even were the artist never anything more than the passive channel through which influences from the outer world flowed as they rose to the level of fine art. This, of course, is never actually the case. Rather is the artist always creative in the true sense of being active; and his labour is really reflective, rational, deliberate, even while it is at the same moment spontaneous. From this point of view, indeed, the sharp contrast so often drawn between "artistic" and "intellectual" activity disappears almost altogether. For in both provinces alike we obviously find experiment, precision, detail, spontaneity and emotion; to say nothing of effort and determination. In two respects, however, art must always remain distinct from "thought" in the too narrow intellectualist sense of this term. In the first place, art deals with the objectively *sensuous*, not with the *abstract* and subjective; secondly, the outside observer very rarely sees the preliminary operations, but only the completed product; while in history and science, on the other hand, the analytic treatment is often as important as the final conclusions.

4. But it is too often forgotten, unfortunately, that

what is thus true of art is equally true of the intellect and of all practical action; only, since great art constitutes a clearly distinct department of its own which is wholly separate, at first sight, alike from thought and from practice, the principles lying at its root are much more easily discerned. No such severance, however, actually exists; its appearance is an illusion due simply to the patent contrasts between the visible products of artistic creation on the one hand, and on the other the intangible psychic material of reason and the common content of daily life. It must be remembered, too, that all these artistic productions are ultimately subjected to a drastic process of rejection which ensures that only their highest forms attain permanence—a test from which our everyday actions are fortunately free. But that art is one form of practice is obvious; and when it becomes equally obvious that it is a form which always makes very heavy demands on rationality it will be the more truly appreciated. And since art itself is practice, there is no real reason why all our practice should not be artistic. "A man", said Emerson, "is a beggar who only lives to the useful"; and there is no part of our daily life that might not be enriched by culture.

But the "precise details and exact interrelations" that I have just insisted upon as essential characteristics of fine art [1] are equally obvious as the indispensable features of all knowledge; and although they have been most successfully attained in modern science, they are really the supreme governing ideals of *all* types of intellectual research without exception. For throughout this entire sphere there operates an increasingly prevalent and powerful tendency towards the dominance of the

[1] *Ante*, p. 41.

spirit—though not of course the detailed methods and contents—of mathematical investigation ; in other words, clarity, exactitude, and logical connectedness are more and more universally becoming accepted as the necessary conditions for all fruitful speculation. It is certainly true that it is supremely difficult to confer upon the results of prolonged intellective activity the finished completeness of every work of art ; but this is due only to the inevitable abstractness of its details together with the total absence of artistic sensuousness. Nonetheless many scientific theories and classic histories possess a literary quality little removed from the beauty of art ; and even when we turn to daily life the same features are easily discovered. Every legal document and process, for example, must be super-scientific in its exactness ; but even this cannot prevent historic charters, religious creeds and national constitutions having a true dignity peculiarly their own.

All these characteristics taken together, then, reflect or express certain inherent attitudes of the human mind which steadily emerge in the long course of its continuous response to its changing environment. It makes no difference to the fundamental principle which is here involved whether they are the fruits of the individual or of the general mind—of thinker or artist, or of church or nation. For in all cases alike they represent the highest levels of attainment of such a mind ; and they involve, further, the severest labour and self-discipline. These influences plainly make their impression, not only on the outer environment, but equally upon the society or individual. As the process goes on these slowly emerging qualities become more and more definite—more easily recognizable to the dispassionate observer as ineradicable

from individual or country. They represent, still further, the single and undeviating tendency of mind as such —its constant endeavour to attain, and then immediately to transcend, each of these attributes ; and thus they constitute the sole true criterion of selfhood—its ultimate ideal standard which is, however, itself incessantly advancing because of the unlimited capacity for self-expression of all mind as such.

These principles then are of the highest significance in their bearing upon both the nature of personality and its relation to the universe. For they at once imply that the human mind has its own definite status and peculiar functions within that universe ; for certain purposes, in other words, finite mind is clearly indispensable. This would still remain true even if it were a merely passive instrument by whose means the universe, as it were, raised itself to higher and higher stages, in the same way that protoplasm, while itself completely unconscious, becomes the material basis of life ; in that case consciousness might be termed a kind of psychic protoplasm. But this would simply mean that it is an instrument that knows both itself and its environing universe ; and its knowledge, still further, is never simply a receptive contemplation but becomes, in the end, the foundation of its volitional activity.

CHAPTER III

THE BASIS OF THE UNITY OF SELFHOOD

1. The preceding conception of the self as a plastically definite—and to that degree persistent—system appears to yield the solution of a number of long-standing difficulties. For while it is plainly impossible to deny the extremely complex nature of selfhood, it is on the other hand frequently argued that this complexity characterizes only the *content* of personality, so that personality in itself must still be sought in some force or agency, some unity or synthesis, which holds this content together, and is, therefore, essentially different from it. What this force or synthesis actually may be, again, is often regarded as altogether beyond our powers of discovery and description; its content, on the other hand, forms the proper subject-matter of psychological investigation. Even Höffding, despite his purely scientific standpoint, holds that "the synthesis, the inner unity in us, always hides itself, however deeply we try to penetrate into consciousness; it is the constant presupposition".[1] As I shall endeavour to show a little later, there is a sense in which this is quite true; but if this view of selfhood is carried too far, it obviously becomes difficult to distinguish it from the older concept of the self as being both simple and transcendent—as an entity, in other

[1] *Outlines of Psychology*, p. 138.

words, whose nature is either inexplicable or incomprehensible. But once again it must be emphasized that the true uniqueness of selfhood lies not in its simply being a system, but rather in that *specific content* which constitutes the system. For, as I have already argued, every real without exception is systematic ; it follows therefore that reals can differ from one another only in the type of material that actually enters into any given system—either physical or vital or psychical, as the case may be. The problem therefore of the nature of that unifying power which holds the system together—the synthesizing agency—the "inner unity" of Höffding—is essentially a *universal* problem ; for it concerns every kind of system alike and equally, and is not therefore a difficulty peculiar to personality alone, except insofar as its nature is extraordinarily complex on the one hand, and closely concerns mankind on the other.

The solution of the difficulty in the particular case of the self thus merges in that of the problem of synthetic unity in general, whether this be physical or physiological or psychical ; for so far as the basal principle is concerned the answer must be the same in every instance alike. The ultimate source of the unity of every system, then, can be found in the nature of its constituent elements, and there alone. Each of these elements is so constituted that to certain others it is either attracted, neutral, or repellent. For it must here be recalled that every real is dynamic—active—the centre of a field of force or energy ;[1] and its description can never be finally complete until this inherent dynamic aspect has been duly taken into account. Here again we must guard against too deep a preoccupation with that static character of every

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 26.

real which must, owing to the exigencies of analysis, frequently be given the first place in its description. For as I have remarked already, the comprehension of permanent structure is indispensable to the complete understanding of changing function ; [1] but on the other hand the actual meaning and purpose of structure can be perceived only through the study of function ; and it is extremely unfortunate that science has hitherto been compelled, simply by the immense difficulties of investigation, to concentrate mainly upon static arrangement to the comparative neglect of the inseparable dynamic activity. The recent discoveries in physics, however, have produced a profound change in the entire point of view. The " simple " structureless Daltonian atom has been superseded by the system of whirling electrons, just as inactive space has given place to intensely dynamic ether ; and if the very fundamentals of the material universe are thus impregnated with activity it obviously follows that this must be equally inherent in every higher form of combination without exception. These philosophic principles have recently been markedly emphasized, from the strictly scientific standpoint, in Dr. A. N. Whitehead's exhaustive analysis of the various problems ; but as I have already discussed his general position in an earlier volume it will be sufficient here to give the necessary references in the footnote below.[2]

2. In the very nature of every real without exception, therefore, there exists the inherent capacity to unite with some other reals so as to constitute a system more complex

[1] P. 41 *ante*.

[2] *The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation*, Index, " Whitehead."

than themselves; positive nucleus and electrons, *e.g.* in the atom, different atoms in molecules, and so on until planets and sun, if not indeed all the stars and the whole of matter, form one continuous system; for this last conclusion is the logical implication both of recent astronomical observation and of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. "We have come to recognize", observes Professor Eddington, "that the stellar system is one great organization . . . it was one process of evolution sweeping across the primordial matter which caused it to form itself into stars, and these original stars are the actual stars which we see shining now".[1] This general principle, however, must be applied not merely abstractly, but rather in the concrete detail relevant to any given instance; for to maintain that the synthesizing activity in any given combination springs from the character of all its factors immediately raises the further question why they themselves manifest this activity; and this enquiry then demands the further analysis of every separate factor, and, obviously, the facing of the same question repeatedly, but always in a different form. Thus it is that all vital processes are found to present chemical and physical aspects, although I do not mean by this that these processes forfeit their essential status as vital when they are regarded from the physico-chemical standpoint.[2] The problem, in other words, is essentially a problem of standpoint, of emphasis, and not of the substitution for complex categories of simpler ones.[3] Similarly, chemical pheno-

[1] *Nature*, vol. 111, p. 18.

[2] But the by no means distant possibility of synthesizing living protoplasm is now maintained by research workers in organic chemistry.

[3] I refrain from employing "higher categories" and "lower", so as not to prejudice the issue here.

mena are increasingly being found to be due to physical properties and processes, and these in their turn to depend upon the attributes of atoms and electrons.[1]

It is then in the light of these facts that the nature of the unity of every system must be expressed. This "inner unity"—the synthetic bond—is never something other than and different from the activity of the elements of the system themselves, as these actually function within that system. It is not in any degree transcendent—not some entity or character which descends upon these elements from without and then holds them together, somewhat as an invading despot gives order to a distracted nation. On the contrary it springs out of the very nature of all the different elements considered each by itself, just as our national form of government is the joint product of the character of every citizen, or (in a much simpler field) as the valency of a chemical atom—the property which controls its combinations with other elements—is determined by the electronic structure of its outer ring, and this in its turn by the mutual attractions of all the electrons and the nucleus in that particular atom. It must here be recognized that these are definitely ascertained facts whose further implications and analogical applications are highly significant; and the general principle involved may, I think, be adequately expressed by saying that the unifying bond which holds together every real system without exception itself forms part of the very nature of each factor in that system. In other words, we do not fully understand the nature of these separate factors until we know definitely both what

[1] Reference to any recent textbook on Physical Chemistry will substantiate this assertion; a concise survey of the whole field is given in Reiche's recent *Quantum Theory*.

other factors they can combine with, and why this particular combination, and no other, is necessary; and in modern physics and chemistry, if not indeed equally in biology, these enquiries, far from being vain and fruitless, are rapidly becoming capable of yielding results of fundamental importance.[1] Once again we have to deal with the principle that the static is but a subordinate aspect of the dynamic—that structure is always instrumental to function. The inherent nature of every real, from electron to solar system, is such as to enable it to combine in some way or another with other reals. Their combination is then sometimes structural, in the sense that a definite and persistent complex form becomes discernible, as in all molecular and crystal structures, or, again, in the legislative and judicial institutions of a country. But whether this definiteness of structure is present or not—and it is often very difficult, as *e.g.* in protoplasm, to discover it—there always exists a true *functional* combination—that is the cooperation of the dynamic activities of all the factors. For it is part of their intrinsic nature to enter into some definite system, and not to remain in eternal isolation; the resultant combination, further, springing as it does from this intrinsic nature, must be always necessary, never accidental nor fortuitous. So far therefore as they are apprehended merely as separate, as out of relation to their relevant system, these elements are not apprehended in their true reality; for reality itself is always functional, even while every function demands a definite structural basis. *Quod non agit*, as Leibniz taught long ago, *non existit*.

[1] I may instance an article by Professor J. S. Huxley on the early development of the ovum in *Nature*, vol. 113, p. 276.

3. It is true, of course, that this indispensable process of investigation into the nature of constituent factors ultimately reaches an insuperable barrier. For when we have ascertained how the unity of any given system springs from the action of all its elemental parts, we have always still to explain—as I have already remarked—the *modus operandi* of each of these constituents in itself; and this, as before, necessitates its analysis into yet simpler forms. If however this cannot be performed our problem, in that particular case, cannot be solved. But this negative result is subject to two important qualifications. In the first place, our failure in any given instance is not in itself sufficient to invalidate the general principle that I have here attempted to express. For this inability to carry our analysis still further is not general but exceptional, and we can never lay down in advance any limit beyond which it will be impossible to go; while the positive results of all recent investigation are amply sufficient, in my own opinion, to establish the truth of the principle in question;[1] and already it has been suggested by some physicists that even the electron itself will be found to possess a complex internal structure. But in the second place it must be noted that even the simplest constituents never contain their nature wholly within themselves—they can never be regarded, that is to say, as completely isolated reals. Rather are they always aspects or phases of some inclusive whole to whose nature their own distinctive characteristics are really due. Each electron and each atom, *e.g.* is a focus or centre in the total universe of matter or electricity or energy; and it is this universe that really determines the properties

[1] *Cf.* the instances and further references cited earlier in the present chapter; to multiply these would be simple but tedious.

and activities of every atom and electron alike. Similarly the character and activity of every individual are materially influenced by the social atmosphere in which he exists—that is, in other words, by the pressure of the nation which confers his civic status upon him. In all these instances alike we are ultimately driven back upon some form of reality as a *total system or whole*, which acts in and through every one of its elemental parts. In a sense therefore these are not literally " elemental parts " at all, but rather subordinate phases of the inclusive and immanent whole.[1] Nor is this presentation of the phenomena such a fallacious circular argument as it may appear to be at first sight. For we seem first of all to explain the unity of the whole in terms of its elements, and then to account for the nature of these in terms of the whole. This is certainly true ; but, in the first place, it is obvious that it is our sole method of explanation, since besides the whole and its constituents there exists nothing whatever to which we can appeal ; and secondly, our " circular " method has actually yielded results of fundamental importance. For it has both revealed the true nature of many of the elements of the whole, and enabled us further to place these in their proper relation each to the other ; here again it is amply sufficient to survey the course of recent research in the physical and biological sciences on the one hand, and on the other in history or anthropology, to perceive the high value of the consequent reorientation of our entire field of enquiry.

This, after all, is the utmost that investigation can ever hope to attain—insight into the nature of, and the relation between, the whole and its parts or aspects. Further

[1] *Cf.* my earlier references to Dr. A. N. Whitehead.

than this it is manifestly impossible to go ; for we cannot understand the whole except in terms of its parts, nor these—ultimately—except in terms of the whole, simply because in so doing we have exhausted all possible material. Our procedure therefore may be in a sense circular, but it is certainly not on that account fallacious.

4. So much then for the general principle of synthetic unity in its operation throughout the real universe. It now remains to consider its application to the nature of the self ; and here a further vitally important consideration must be taken into account—the continuous responsiveness of the self to its environment. But it may first be pointed out that the obviously enormous complexity both of personality and of environment does not affect the principle in question, except insofar as it inevitably makes any detailed elucidation a matter of equivalent difficulty. In this respect an illustration from modern physical theory may be serviceable. It is, then, only in the case of the simplest atoms—those which contain two or three revolving electrons—that mathematical calculation is at present capable of expressing the phenomena ; for all the elements containing some higher number of electrons the requisite mathematical formulæ are at present unattainable, simply because of the baffling complexity of their internal structure and activity.[1] Still this does not affect the fact that these highly complex processes are, in principle, mathematically calculable, and may some day be thus expressed. Personality, then, corresponds in its great complexity to these more complex atoms ; in both cases alike therefore the difficulties of investigation are merely practical and do not

[1] *Cf.* below, p. 139 n.

vitiate the underlying principles that are involved; and finally, it is just this high complexity of its organization that renders possible the extreme delicacy that is characteristic of all the self's reactions to its environment.

But when we regard the self as always thus responsive to its surrounding world we at once perceive that the separate factors of its experience must to some degree express or reflect the intrinsic unity of that world,[1] and this the more fully as experience itself advances. The feelings and sensations of infancy are largely the results of the influence of the environment upon the organism; and owing to the ruling conditions of the situation they are necessarily sporadic and unrelated; the organization of the self, in fact, is as yet only rudimentary. Nevertheless every one of these sporadic psychic elements possesses an inherent capacity for combining with others to form a true system; for all conscious experience, viewed from the evolutionary standpoint, is the outcome of the influence of the objective world upon nervous organization,[2] and necessarily expresses therefore, as I have just observed, the systematic character of that world. This inherent systematic unity of experience is plainly discernible throughout all instinctive animal behaviour; for it is revealed equally in the characteristic rigidity of instinct, in its developed manifestation at the earliest stages of life, and finally in its transmission by inheritance.

[1] To resolve this outer world into some form of experience is a subjectivism that seems to me quite untenable. But I must here assume the objective reality of the environment without discussing the question in detail; *cf. A Theory of Direct Realism.*

[2] This statement of course leaves unexplained the problem of the relation between consciousness and its physiological basis; but here again the fact must be accepted, since its discussion is outside the scope of the present enquiry.

All the psychical elements of instinctive experience therefore, precisely like the electrons in an atom, inevitably tend to form a complex system, and can never exist in isolation ; [1] in both cases alike the synthetic bond—the "inner unity"—springs directly out of the nature of all the constituent elements themselves, manifesting itself first of all *simultaneously* in every total phase of animal experience, as this proves itself adequately responsive to the biological necessities of any given situation, and also *successively*, as all the various stages of instinctive activity follow each other in their appointed order. In both of these aspects alike every feeling and impulse and appetite defy our purely theoretic isolation, and plainly imply their associates so as all together to constitute some complex experience ; and although in the animal world the self, just as during human infancy, is of the most rudimentary character, still the same principle rules the fully developed adult personality. The only substantial difference from the purely psychological standpoint consists in the development of those *ideational factors* which underlie all the distinctive characteristics of human experience [2] as compared with animal consciousness ; for it is ultimately these conceptual elements, and not instinct, that assume the effective control of all the higher levels of man's activity. But again every distinguishable element of any given phase of experience, as of any prolonged period, plainly exhibits in its own character its inherent combining capacity—its claim to take its due place and fulfil its proper function only within some system. If indeed we consider the dominating

[1] Even when electrons are released they retain their tendency to enter some fresh atomic system.

[2] *Cf.* further with reference to ideation, *The Development of Religion*, chaps. ii, v, *et passim*.

determinants of all human action—personal ideals and purposes, fixed tastes and habits—this intrinsic combining power becomes perfectly obvious; for apart from this it is impossible properly to understand their psychical character, and psychological description at once becomes a matter of unreal abstraction.

5. From this standpoint therefore the unity of the self does not emanate from some single and unique central element that might be compared to the geometrical point-centre of a circle.[1] Such a conception is radically misleading, and yet it has for long been the governing idea in the psychology of personality. Thus we find even so scientific an investigator as Lotze expressing a view which it is difficult, when taken with due literalness, to distinguish from the geometrical concept just referred to. In Self-consciousness, he asserts "we distinguish ourselves as *Ego* from the *Non-ego* of the rest of the world, and refer our manifold inner states to this Ego, as the cohesive centre of afferent and efferent actions". Similarly, "we are directed to a more or less obscure point, in which lies our Ego, of which we are in search".[2] But not only does such a "point-ego", as it may be called, never exist, but it never can exist; it is a sheer nonentity, precisely as the centre of a circle is a pure geometric abstraction that has no physical reality. "A mere spatial point-flash of instantaneous duration" has recently been termed by Dr. A. N. Whitehead an "event-particle"; and he warns us that we "must not think of the world as ultimately built up of event-particles. That is to put the cart before the horse";[3] and it must

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 29. [2] *Microcosmus*, vol. i. p. 248.
[3] *The Concept of Nature*, p. 172.

be confessed that both philosophy and psychology have usually attempted to travel towards the nature of selfhood in this unpractical fashion. Introspectively, however, as Hume argued long ago, no such punctual ego can ever be discerned; "I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception"; [1] and in our own day William James has carried this criticism still further by attempting to reduce "the feeling of this central active self" to "some bodily process, for the most part taking place within the head . . . it is difficult for me to detect in the activity any purely spiritual element at all".[2]

Against all theories of this type it must be maintained, I believe, not only that the self is essentially a complex system—for this is now frequently admitted [3]—but that the fundamental unity of this system—the bond or agency which holds its elements together and so makes it into a system—springs from the intrinsic nature of these very elements themselves. It is, in other words, an inherent part or aspect of the nature of each, to combine with others to form some systematic whole. Whenever the psychic elements concerned can be still further analysed their nature can be explained in terms of their simpler factors; and when this analytic process has reached its limits we find that every element is itself an essential part or aspect of some inclusive whole from which it cannot be separated.

It is equally true, of course, that the constituents of any given system are not all of the same importance. Always some are dominant and the remainder subordinate;

[1] *Treatise on Human Nature*, vol. i. part iv. sect. 6.

[2] *Principles of Psychology*, vol. i. pp. 299, 300.

[3] *Cf.* Professor Stout, *Groundwork of Psychology*, p. 8. "The term "soul" is virtually only another name for the total system of psychical dispositions and psychical processes."

and in this sense, but in this sense only, it is perfectly legitimate to speak of a real centre or focus of that system. This, however, is never analogous to a mere geometrical point; on the contrary, it is always itself a system, and generally of the highest order of complexity, with the exception of its own containing whole. Obvious examples are afforded by the positive nucleus of the atom, the nucleus of the living cell, the G.H.Q. of an army or the head office of any business organization—all, manifestly, of the highest type of intricacy. Similarly there undoubtedly exists in every personality a dominating system of beliefs and purposes, of habits and attitudes, which when taken all together may rightly be regarded as constituting the self *par excellence*:—as a definite yet plastic whole held together by no mysterious transcendent bond but simply in and through the inherent nature of its own parts. Thus we may conclude with Mr. Bradley that "the Ego that pretends to be anything either before or beyond its concrete psychical filling, is a gross fiction";[1] and the next chapter will deal with the more positive standpoint with regard to the self that has been adopted by him in his recent volumes.

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 89.

CHAPTER IV

PERSONALITY AND THE REAL WHOLE

1. JUST as the existence of any absolutely simple self was denied by Hume, so the reality not only of the transcendent, but equally of systematic, selfhood has in our own day been questioned by Mr. Bradley. "Is the self real, is it anything which we can predicate of reality?" he asks. "Or is it, on the other hand, a mere appearance—something which is given, and, in a sense, most certainly exists, but which is too full of contradictions to be the genuine fact?" and he continues, "I have been forced to embrace the latter conclusion".[1] The ground of his philosophic repudiation of the reality of selfhood at once shows his position to be diametrically opposed to Hume's; for contradictions necessarily imply some measure of complexity, even though they also render any true system impossible.

It must be remembered of course that Mr. Bradley, while thus refusing to attribute reality to the self, at the same time maintains that it both indubitably exists, and is an appearance; it is, in fact, just because it is an appearance that it cannot be real. For reality, in its true sense, can belong only to the Whole, and to nothing

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 75. *Cf.* pp. 81, 103: "if the self has been narrowed to a point which does not change, that point is less than the real self . . . the self has no power to defend its own reality from mortal objections".

whatever that falls short of this; whence his position logically follows *ex definitione*; "in whatever way the self is taken, it will prove to be appearance".[1] But every appearance, further, taken just as it is, is a manifestation of reality. "The Absolute *is* its appearances, it really is all and every one of them. . . . The Absolute is each appearance, and is all, but it is not any one as such . . . reality without appearance would be nothing." Further, appearances, when thus regarded as in their relation to the Whole, differ in the degree to which they manifest the Whole, and differ therefore in their value, or level, or even reality;—"The Absolute is not all equally, but one appearance is more real than another";[2] and finally personality, far from being one of the lowest and poorest of these levels, "is no doubt the highest form of experience which we have".[3]

The terms "real" and "reality" obviously possess here an unusual but profound meaning, which is, I venture to think, fully in accordance with my own comparison between the general attributes of reality given in Chapter I and those of the self in Chapter II; for my argument, in brief, has been that human personality shares to a marked degree the fundamental characters of the real. But still further, it appears to me that all those features which are stressed in Mr. Bradley's criticisms of the nature of the self and in the objections that he has advanced against its claims to reality are in fact capable of being regarded either as based upon its general characteristics, or as the necessary outcome of these;

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 486, 487. *Cf.* p. 489: "the Absolute has no assets beyond appearances".

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

they are, in other words, such as must logically pertain to *all* reals [1] when these are taken in their most universal aspects. It is urged, for example, that " when we survey the man's self from the cradle to the coffin, we may be able to find no one average . . . it is impossible to unite in one mass these conflicting psychical contents . . . there is no longer any single self ".[2] This contention, however, is merely the expression of that highly *plastic complexity* of all personality which I have emphasized throughout the two preceding chapters, and which alone enables it adequately to respond to its ever varying environment. It is quite true that at the lower levels of selfhood this plasticity is altogether too well marked—so much so, indeed, that we find an indefinite fluidity rather than plasticity proper ; at these stages therefore there seems to be no stable personality at all, but only that merely passive or unregulated reaction to every external change which occurs in apathetic and childish natures. This condition, however, as I have already endeavoured to show, is simply the natural result of the gradual replacement of the rigid and effective instinctive control of animal behaviour by a scarcely developed rationality ; and when we pass to still higher forms of personality it appears to me that Mr. Bradley's statement is altogether too extreme. For in the case of a Cæsar or Socrates, a Napoleon, Lincoln or Jesus, it undoubtedly becomes possible " to unite in one mass " the entire psychical content in such a way that we become more or less able to discern a " single self " that has gone

[1] The word " real " has an obvious ambiguity, which is however equally characteristic of Mr. Bradley's own treatment. Either the Whole alone is real, or appearances also are real, according to the standpoint we choose to adopt.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

on developing and expanding throughout the whole life, and has further been exempt from any disruptive conflict. I do not mean however that no conflicts have ever occurred in such cases. On the contrary, as is at once obvious from the instances just cited, profound conflicts are fundamentally characteristic of the whole career. Only these are never such as to destroy personality—as so often happens in the average individual—but rather raise it to still higher and higher levels; thus the unceasing struggle itself creates an increasingly nobler self; and in this fact we discern another essential characteristic of all true personality.

This principle, it may be noted, is universal in its application and need by no means be restricted solely to the moral sphere; for this is only one of its many instances, though doubtless the most important. Nor do age and death necessarily destroy the unity of such great selves, as is again obvious in all the men named above with the possible exception of Napoleon. It must here be remembered, however, that fully to appreciate individuals of such a calibre always demands an equally great mind; so that if there is any failure "to find one average", as Mr. Bradley affirms, this may only betray the narrow capacity of the observing mind, for whom it must be extremely difficult to trace the plastic response of any complex self to an equally complex environment, just as (to cite my previous illustration) it is impossible for the modern mathematician to formulate the physical processes of the more complex atoms.

These considerations provide a sufficient reply, again, to Mr. Bradley's later assertion that "personal identity is mainly a matter of degree. The question has a meaning, if confined to certain aspects of the self . . . there

will be a limit fixed in the end by no clear principle. But in what the *general* sameness of one self consists is a problem insoluble because it is meaningless." [1] Once more this is undeniably true of the average man and woman, where the various "aspects of the self" remain almost totally uncoordinated; and again we need only turn to any great historic figure to perceive the emergence of a "clear principle" in whose light the definite unity —only, always, a highly complex and plastic unity—of their characters and lives may be discovered.

2. It is only necessary then to appeal to one of the fundamental principles of the philosophic school to which Mr. Bradley himself belonged to discover the solution of his problem. This is to be found in the principle that whenever we are concerned with the various stages of any prolonged course of development their meaning and value must be sought not in their lowest forms but in their highest. We must always look forward to the end rather than backward to the beginning, although at the same time the beginning itself is of supreme significance; only, in quite another sense from Talleyrand's, it is "the beginning of the end." It is, in other words, the essential foundation, or part of the foundation, of the final superstructure, in relation to which its own specific nature must always be considered; and once again it is easily possible radically to misinterpret this "specific nature." For if this is regarded merely *as* a structure—that is purely as a *static* arrangement—then the error arises which I have already discussed of taking the static in place of the dynamic, and thus of ignoring that functional interconnection between the definite

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

structure and its whole environment, in virtue of which its entire later development takes place. All this is true of the ordinary self as of every other evolving real; and to insist, as Mr. Bradley appears to do, on its imperfections, its lack of unity and coordination, while excluding, not only its future possibilities, but its actual attainment in such great personalities as I have just referred to of at least some measure of true harmony is as patently illogical as it would be to criticize the organization of mammals because of the rudimentary nervous system of the jelly-fish. Despite its simplicity, the latter formed one indispensable stage in biological evolution; and similarly the average self and the average society, with all their "contradictions," contain within themselves the indispensable conditions which, acting together with the changing environment, alone can determine the emergence of all higher forms of personality, both social and individual.

3. In all that precedes I have endeavoured to present the characters of selfhood in their relation to the characters of reality in general, and to show that the self is in no sense unique, but rather resembles all other definite reals in the governing principles of its constitution and development. It is, as I have previously pointed out, certainly unique so far as its own specific *content* is concerned—that is those psychic elements which together make up every personality—desires, emotions, purposes, beliefs and so on.[1] But this again is equally true of every type of real without exception—of the physical realm of matter, energy and motion as of the biological sphere of protoplasm and organic function. Each

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 48.

subdivision of existence includes its own specific content, although this again is never absolutely different from that of others ; for if it were it is obvious that no connection with any differing environment could ever be established. Even the apparently absolute contrast between mind and matter is traversed first by their inseverable union within human experience, and secondly by the emergence of consciousness from its earlier unconscious basis in the course of evolution.

If then the general characteristics of selfhood are thus shared by all other reals, it must follow that the development of personality is closely related to that of reality as a whole. This raises the question of the destiny of the finite self as evolution advances to higher and higher levels ; and we have seen already that the self is " the highest form of experience which we have." [1] But there must now be considered Mr. Bradley's well-known principle that " Reality is the unity in which all things, coming together, are transmuted, in which they are changed all alike, though not changed equally " ; the final result of the transmutation being that the apparent discordance and distraction are overruled into harmony, and so become but the condition " of fuller and more individual development." [2]

It seems to me that throughout the later discussion of this position its true implications have been largely lost sight of. Its cardinal features are two—or perhaps still more exactly, its single cardinal feature presents a dual aspect ; for to insist on two really separate principles is to vitiate the basal unity of Mr. Bradley's whole system of thought. One of these features then—or

[1] *Ante*, p. 62.

[2] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 488. *Cf.* further below, p. 73.

one aspect—is of course transmutation—change—metamorphosis—transformation; and this, when so definitely emphasized, naturally challenges all our familiar convictions and beliefs. And yet metamorphosis itself is a perfectly familiar natural phenomenon, characterizing as it obviously does every case of development from the embryonic to the final form of organization; there need therefore be nothing necessarily alarming in the assertion that every finite self, if it is to persist at all, must purchase this endurance at the cost of its own transformation. On the contrary, this principle forms an essential part of several religious systems both Christian and non-Christian; and it is again highly instructive to note that here the appeal is often made to certain critical stages in the natural life of the individual even when their actual nature is scarcely understood. The old conceptions of rebirth and re-creation, for example: surely the suggestion at once presents itself that if the modern scientific and evolutionary standpoint had been familiar, with its insistence on naturalness and continuity, a still deeper significance might have been discovered in these analogies, if at the same time the prevailing belief in some divine agency could have been retained.[1] But if with this metamorphic aspect of Mr. Bradley's contention we combine the equally fundamental principles of an ever fuller and higher unity, of the unbroken transition from "discordance and distraction" to an overruling harmony, of the truth that while change is universal, it is at the same time unequal, and finally that all these together form "the condition of more *individual* develop-

[1] I am not arguing here that this belief is indispensable; it is sufficient for my present consideration to suppose that it has been an element of some value at least in the history of thought.

ment," [1] we attain a position which, when considered in the light of all the patent attributes of selfhood, is very far from implying its destruction or disappearance by some process of final absorption into the Absolute.

4. A brief comment on Mr. Bradley's general standpoint may not be out of place here. The Absolute—by which is meant simply the real whole or totality of existence [2]—is neither a god which devours its own offspring as in the old Greek myths, nor a vacuous cave wherein everything disappears. On the contrary, it contains and conserves all subordinate reals,[3] while at the same time their transformation is always, at least in part, a *self*-transformation which inevitably arises in the course of their unbroken evolution ; the only conceivable alternatives being the impossible ones of the unchangingly static nature of all things, or their uninterrupted degeneration. We may of course regard this self-transmutation as being ultimately due to the presence of the Whole within, or its pressure upon, every distinguishable real ; nonetheless does it remain a process always internal to, and essentially characteristic of, these reals in themselves ; it is neither completely external nor arbitrarily artificial. Thus regarded, a further logical result—as Mr. Bradley has argued—is the uninterrupted " absorption " or " suppression " of certain aspects which, at any of

[1] *Ante*, p. 67.

[2] To read more into the term, at this stage, is merely to impute to the Absolute certain attributes of earlier conceptions of supreme reality which have been found in various ways inadequate or unsatisfactory. Mr. Bradley's own position, with which alone I am concerned, is outlined in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 548 ; and (p. 183) : " we cannot possibly construe such an experience to ourselves ".

[3] *Cf.* note 1, p. 63 *ante*.

the earlier stages, are essentially characteristic; but this suggestion again implies nothing that is really foreign to our ordinary point of view. For it expresses no more than does the transition from the chemical and physical descriptions of vital processes to their biological description proper, or again from the history and character of a person, regarded purely as an individual, to the same history and character regarded from the standpoint of his age and society. It must first be clearly recognized that neither of these methods of investigation destroys the other; rather are both indispensable to the full comprehension of all the phenomena if these are to be thoroughly grasped as a unified whole. The processes of cell-division, *e.g.* or the changes occurring within the entire organism, are all most probably capable of being exhaustively described in terms of physics and chemistry.[1] But even their most complete description in these terms alone is altogether inadequate to present their true biological nature. To express this we must turn to concepts of a totally different order, such as function and purpose, evolution and heredity. Each group of categories therefore in this particular field of phenomena illuminates and supplements the other; but since the physico-chemical category is simpler and more abstract than the biological—since it is a

[1] *Cf.* "There is no good evidence that the ordinary laws of physics and chemistry do not apply to the living cell or animal. . . . There is no evidence of any value that an evasion (of the second law of thermodynamics) really occurs" (Prof. Hill, *Nature*, vol. 113, p. 862). "Physico-chemical processes of varying degrees of complexity form at present the most reasonable basis for our working hypotheses (with regard to the central nervous system)" (R. D. Gillespie, *British Journal of Psychology*, vol. xv. p. 273).

matter more of analysis than of synthesis—it is plainly true to say that the physical and chemical aspects of every living process are transcended or "absorbed" in the vital. It is always towards the latter standpoint, in other words, that our investigations must travel; and only when it is attained can we be said adequately to understand the phenomena as a whole. This in itself, I suppose, is too obvious to need further emphasis; what always tends to be ignored here, however, is first the true relation that should subsist between our various methods of explanation and investigation, and secondly the fact that the principles of the more abstract category —in this case the physico-chemical—far from being abandoned must be retained throughout, and so brought into proper connection with the more concrete category; and this necessary advance may then be quite properly described as "absorption"—that is not as total suppression but as inclusion in a wider body of knowledge, together with subordination to a truer point of view. Precisely the same applies, of course, to modern physics and chemistry in their relation to one another, and to the biography [1] of any prominent citizen as compared with the history of his period. Once again, as so often before, we are concerned here with matters of emphasis and standpoint, and with the principles that should govern our estimate of their value and importance. In the last instance, for example, this estimate would often be determined by literary or personal interests; yet though this is always true to some degree, it is plainly undeniable that even the greatest statesman ranks as secondary to his own nation and to humanity; and so far as this is true the individual valuation is transcended by the

[1] I suppose still more the autobiography.

social. It is then only necessary to generalize this principle to arrive at Mr. Bradley's position that every advance in the evolution of reality logically implies the progressive "absorption"—in the above sense—of every real within the Whole as the all-inclusive system of being. These must, as he has expressed it, "be dissolved in something not poorer but richer than themselves. . . . Thought *would be present* in a higher intuition; will would be there where the ideal had become reality; and beauty and pleasure and feeling *would live on* in this total fulfilment. Every flame of passion would still burn in the Absolute *unquenched and unabridged*, a note absorbed in the harmony of its higher bliss".[1]

This passage makes it abundantly plain that thus to be "absorbed" is (as I have just maintained) not by any means to be destroyed, but merely to be included and subordinated; and the final result of this process, it is equally essential to notice, is always a fuller and richer type of existence.[2] Nor does this usage of "absorb" altogether conflict with its ordinary meaning. For we often describe a person as "absorbed" in his family or his profession; and by this we generally mean his elevation to a higher level than that of mere individuality, not his disappearance nor total suppression; rather does this "absorption" necessitate a completer revelation of his true capacities than can ever be given by his more ordinary activities.[3]

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 172. *Cf. Abt Vogler*, x, xi.

[2] *Cf.* p. 182: "In that higher unity *no fraction* of anything is lost . . . the product of this fusion keeps the riches of all . . . the differences are not lost, but are all contained in the whole"; (my italics throughout).

[3] *Cf.* Professor Pringle-Pattison's reference to "self-development through absorption in objective interests and the universal life". (*Idea of God*, p. 294).

But again these features of the situation appear to have been overlooked in recent discussions of Mr. Bradley's conclusions.[1] "Absorption" has been too hastily taken to mean destruction, in spite of the plain implications of the passages I have just quoted as involving preservation and enrichment; and this is amply confirmed by my earlier reference to a "fuller and *more individual* development".[2] This is of the highest importance, and renders it difficult to understand Professor Pringle-Pattison's recent assertion that for Dr. Bosanquet and Mr. Bradley "transmutation in the Absolute is equivalent to the disappearance of individualities".[3] For "individual" means in the first place indivisible; a true individual can never be destroyed nor broken up into its parts; and this is obviously the case with the Absolute as the supreme whole, since if it were "dividual" it could not be a whole at all.[4] Every advance towards fuller individuality means therefore not disappearance but rather greater permanence. But here again the infinite complexity and diversity of all reality must be taken into account; it is upon these attributes that its individuality rests, or out of these, more truly, that it arises; for it is never merely static but always active or dynamic. But when "individuality" is thus interpreted it becomes clear that its usual application to human beings means, in principle, precisely the same. The essence of all personality, that is to say, consists in a wide diversity of qualities which, not in spite of, but just because of their diversity, together form an indivisible system—a true unity which becomes more and

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 67. [2] *Cf. ante*, p. 67, n. 2.
[3] *Proc. Arist. Soc.*, vol. xviii. p. 513.
[4] *Cf.* p. 74 n. 2 below.

more real as this diversity increases, simply because it springs from a more extended basis and reaches to profounder depths.

5. Here, however, two further difficulties arise—one relating to the Absolute and the other to humanity. For with regard to the whole of reality "we cannot imagine", as Mr. Bradley tells us repeatedly, "how in detail this can be. . . . We cannot possibly construe such an experience to ourselves"; [1] any attempt to do so being obviously the hopeless endeavour fully to express the nature of the infinite in terms of our finite thought, so that from the nature of the situation its unity is unintelligible. On the other hand it is only the Absolute, as I have just observed, that can possess full individuality; [2] whence it at once follows that the lower in the scale any particular real falls, the poorer its own individuality must be; the more fragile its unity, and the less prominently does it stand out from its environment. All the lower forms of life, for example, merge almost indistinguishably into the vast stream of natural processes, except when they are singled out for some special purpose such as scientific investigation; while in the inanimate world only the most striking features, such as a great river or mountain, can be credited with any individuality at all, and then very frequently only because of their association with art or religion; and the bearing of these conclusions upon human selfhood is clear. It must be frankly confessed that the individuality of the average person is relatively of a

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 172, 183.

[2] "Perfection of truth and of reality . . . consists in positive, self-subsisting individuality" (*Ibid.*, p. 363).

very low order, painful though this admission may be and invaluable though he undoubtedly is to his fellows. The "average" person, again, when taken simply as himself, is certainly unique; only he is not more so than the great majority of people, while every real without exception, so far as it is in any way distinguishable, is also unique in its own restricted way. Still the ordinary man pursues his own undistinguished way in the social sphere much as the lower animals fall within their natural sphere; and such individuality as he possesses largely arises first from the persistence of his bodily organism and secondly from the habitual routine of his daily life; so that too frequently his attempts to evade this obscurity take the direction of mere eccentricity, thus creating the crank and the fad. But on the other hand, this lack of true individuality constitutes a perpetual challenge to our powers. For the mark of every great personality is individuality in its *real* sense—the firm combination of knowledge and feelings, of will and purposes, each of which taken by itself covers a wide range, but which nonetheless form a persistent unity, capable of facing every emergency of life and of defying all its hostile forces. Such a capacity, it is true, is usually exhibited in only one main direction—in intellectual or artistic power, in practical ability or moral and religious insight; and yet these frequently go together, being seldom found quite lacking in any of the great historic figures of the world; most particularly in the last mentioned instances can we discern keen sensitivity united with a comprehensive intellectual grasp of an intricate situation; for we must not here restrict "intellect" to mere book knowledge or systematic education.

This implies, then, that the only true criterion of selfhood must be sought in the highest levels of its manifestation, not in the sphere of ordinary life; for even here its many unknown heroes plainly exemplify the principles I have just maintained. And the next question that arises is whether this progressive evolution of selfhood must at some point reach its utmost limits, in such a way that either the finite individual, as such, altogether ceases to exist, or personality becomes self-transformed to such a degree that it can no longer properly be regarded as personal at all. The first alternative concerns the reality of personal immortality; but as I have dealt with this subject elsewhere, I may here refer to my conclusion that the nature of human personality, considered from the psychological standpoint, is in itself such as to yield substantial grounds for regarding individual immortality as an actual, though not unchanging, continuation of the present life.[1] Accepting this conclusion provisionally then, the second alternative takes the form: Does experience or consciousness, in following out the direction of the highest conceivable forms of human personality (regarded, of course, as immortal), undergo so complete a change as no longer to constitute a self in any true sense of the term?

I shall begin with Mr. Bradley's principle that the Absolute cannot be regarded as personal, not, however, because its nature is below personality, but rather because it infinitely transcends this. Nor, I suppose, can it be described as impersonal; for just as Kant held that certain religious truths could not be disproved for precisely the same reason that they could not be proved either—that is because they lay altogether beyond the

[1] *Cf. The Development of Religion*, chap. xiii.

sphere of logical demonstration—so the nature of the Absolute falls completely outside the category of personality. It is, once more, inconceivable and inexpressible except in the most general terms, as some form of Experience that is at once infinitely diverse and yet unified.[1] "The Absolute" then (for Mr. Bradley) "has personality, but it fortunately possesses so much more, that to call it personal would be as absurd as to ask if it is moral."[2]

But this conclusion taken in itself cannot mean that a self, once it has come into being and has embarked upon its age-long path of development, must at some point lose its personal character altogether. For the principle just cited obviously applies to the Absolute only, unless we feel ourselves at liberty to add that there may exist other subordinate reals which also in some way transcend personality. But this qualification again is not relevant to the issue concerning selfhood. For in the first place we cannot for a moment suppose that any finite self can so develop as finally to become identical with the Whole; the mere suggestion is at once rendered absurd by the conditions of the problem. But neither need we suppose that the uninterrupted evolution of personality must ultimately transform it into some kind of super-personal, yet subordinate, real. For we have seen abundantly that *every* aspect of reality, every appearance, every manifestation of the Absolute, is preserved within the whole,[3] just as (to repeat my previous illustration) the physico-chemical aspects of vital

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 242: "We laid stress on the fact that the *how* was inexplicable. To perceive the solution in detail is not possible for our knowledge".

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

[3] *Cf. ante*, p. 72, n. 1.

change still persist even when life is regarded from the biological point of view. Personality, then, once it has arisen, must similarly persist *as* personality, even while it becomes by slow degrees fundamentally transformed. Exactly in the same way, to continue my analogy, do the nervous processes in the human brain continue to present a definite chemical aspect, despite their extreme intricacy and delicacy as compared with the simpler interactions which attended the dawn of life. Similarly selfhood, although its continued development must necessarily merge it more and more within the Whole, still continues to be selfhood; and it could only lose this character in some transcendent way by becoming *identical* with the Whole—a possibility that is at once excluded by the very nature of the situation. "Thought", as Dr. Bosanquet has expressed this, "is in principle in relation with the entire real universe, which it may approach from any starting-point, and you cannot tell how far it may reach therefrom."[1] But since the capacity for thought is inherent in selfhood this conclusion, in principle, is identical with my own; and I shall now proceed to consider another inherent characteristic of personality which has hitherto received too little emphasis.

[1] *Mind*, vol. xxxi. p. 235. I may refer again to more detailed arguments on this subject, from the psychological standpoint, in *The Development of Religion*, chap. ix. sect. 4; *cf.* Mr. Bradley in *Essays on Truth*, p. 244: "Our truth, such as it is, has its indispensable part in the one transcendent experience, and is so far secure. But that any particular truths of ours, as we conceive them, should be unconditioned and absolute, seems hardly possible". Once again therefore, truth—like personality—becomes "secure" only through being more fully developed.

CHAPTER V

THE SELF AS A DOMINANT REAL

1. At the end of Chapter III I have maintained that while the self is essentially a complex system, and while further its unity springs from the inherent nature of its several factors, still within this system certain elements are always dominant while others are subordinate: "there exists in every personality a dominating system of beliefs and purposes, of habits and attitudes, which when taken altogether may rightly be regarded as constituting the self *par excellence*".[1] This view enables us, I believe, to understand the nature of self-consciousness as such, and to answer such questions as: What is it that is conscious? How can any combination of psychical elements know either other similar elements, or the objects of the physical world?

The full consideration of these problems plainly demands a complete epistemology; and with reference to the second part—our knowledge of the material universe—I may refer to the treatment of the entire subject in my *Theory of Direct Realism*. Here it must be sufficient to maintain, from the realistic standpoint which I have there endeavoured to establish, that we are fully justified in accepting the naive or common-sense position that the self is directly conscious of its real world, both subjective and objective, if only we

[1] *Ante*, p. 60; *cf.* the examples there given.

regard this self as a system of the kind just described, and not as either mysteriously transcendent, or as a simple point or focus comparable in any way to the geometrical centre of a circle. For this conscious system is never self-enclosed—never cut off by some absolute boundary or barrier from the remainder of reality. On the contrary, although it constantly maintains its own distinctive individuality, it is always in direct contact with some part of its physico-psychical environment so that the changes in this are at once responded to by relevant changes in the system. In this, again, there is nothing incomprehensible ;[1] for just as the inner unity of the self springs from the inherent character of its own elements, so it is equally inherent in these to respond to the surrounding world and thus to create an outer unity.[2] This characteristic sensitiveness is but a further manifestation of their innate capacity to combine with something different from themselves ; and if we pursue this point of view still farther we arrive at William James's identification of the person with "the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children. . . ." This is perfectly justifiable if we choose to interpret the term "self", as James himself says, "in its widest possible sense" ; for it emphasizes the truth that "we are dealing with a fluctuating material"[3]—in other words, as I have repeatedly expressed this, with a highly plastic system. But we carry

[1] Except, of course, in the sense that the ultimate nature of every real is incomprehensible.

[2] An illustration is again provided by the atom, whose electrons combine both inwardly to form the atom itself and at the same time externally with those of other atoms.

[3] *Principles of Psychology*, vol. i. p. 291.

this standpoint altogether too far if we ignore those *persistent* factors of every personality which dominate its whole mass; and these, but only as unified into a dominant system, constitute the self which "is conscious of" all other elements in the total experience, whether subjective or objective. It is precisely this system, *as* a system, that was overlooked by Hume in his search for the self, and whose structural principles were afterwards elucidated in Kant's philosophy of pure reason.[1] For it is perfectly true that isolated psychic entities, such as separate feelings or sensations, cannot be "conscious of" other entities in any developed sense of the term "conscious" such as applies to human experience; although at the same time this may have been the case, in some extremely rudimentary way, when consciousness first appeared in the course of evolution. It is, however, only when evolution has advanced much further—only when the psychic factors have come to form a dominant yet responsive and plastic system, that there emerges human personality conscious equally of itself and its environment. For this system, as a system, is persistent,[2] so that there incessantly passes before it that changing stream of transient existents of which it is conscious, and which it may either absorb within itself, or hold over against itself, as the conditions of the case demand; the first process gives it its own subjective content; the second its objective world, both alike in a state of unceasing change.

2. Thus regarded, the self—in this however resembling every other real—possesses both structure and

[1] This does not of course imply an uncritical acceptance of Kant's results.

[2] *Cf.* chap. ii. *ante*, "Personality as Definite and Persistent".

activity. Only its structure is inconceivably delicate, since its very material, if the paradox is permissible, is wholly immaterial, although some distant comparison may be provided by the intangible ethereal constitution of an electric field of force.[1] Its activity or function, again, is consciousness in all its forms: the relation, or connection, or reaction, between the self, as a psychic structure, and all the contents and objects of its experience; and as William James and Mr. Bradley agree in pointing out, the dividing line between self and not-self is never absolute but constantly fluctuating.[2] But this principle carries with it a consequence of fundamental importance. For when it is realized that many (if not indeed all, but this is here a subordinate point) of the elements of experience thus possess the dual attribute of belonging both to the self and the not-self according to the point of view adopted, then it becomes possible to understand how the self is able to direct its functional activity upon itself, and in this way to observe itself actually in action—to become aware of itself somewhat as we perceive our bodies in a mirror. The precise details of this mode of self-consciousness are here of subordinate importance to the principle involved; whether or not it is retrospective or simultaneous, abso-

[1] I do not suggest that mind is itself ethereal, much less material; my own view is that it is neither; the psychical is *sui generis*.

[2] "The main bulk of the elements on each side is interchangeable. . . . Wellnigh everything contained in the psychical individual may be at one time part of self and at another time part of not-self" (*Appearance*, p. 94). For James, *cf. ante*, p. 80, n. 3; also Dr. McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, sect. 24: "When I enquire as to the division which exists between myself and any other reality, I find it quite impossible to draw the line".

lutely complete or only approximately so, may be left to psychology to decide.[1] It is sufficient first that consciousness is neither fictitious nor inexplicable, but is a real natural process, and secondly that the self, when thus regarded as a psychic system, can become fully and clearly aware of its own nature and of its place with reference to its environment.

In many respects therefore, to use an illustration, the self may be compared to the British Cabinet. For there is, to begin with, no absolute distinction between the Cabinet and the rest of the nation, just as there is none between self and environment; on the contrary, not only (in theory) may any citizen be appointed to membership, but every actual member possesses a dual status as at once minister and citizen. The diversity of offices again, taken together with the doctrine of collective responsibility, is exactly parallel to the complex unity of selfhood, while the dominance of certain personal factors resembles the higher importance of some ministerial positions. Further, the frequent resignation of one member and the appointment of another illustrates the way in which one and the same factor of experience—a desire, memory or purpose—may now be part of the self and again, as objective, be part of the not-self; and this plasticity is similarly visible in the varying phases of Cabinet policy as responsive to public opinion. The Cabinet, once more, may attend not only to the affairs of the nation, but equally to its own constitution and function; exactly so may the self survey its own character and status; while the recent creation of a permanent secretariat to record Cabinet decisions may

[1] My own view coincides in the main with Mr. Bradley's as given in *Appearance*, pp. 90 *seqq*.

be taken to represent memory. Finally, the modern increase in the number of Cabinet Ministers corresponds to the continuous evolution of personality—its unceasing advance in complexity in all directions as the result of its widening contact with the universe.

In contrast with this the earlier concepts of selfhood may be compared with the older ideas of Kingship as being some unique and mysterious attribute whose nature could not be understood by ordinary people, just as its operations were neither to be discerned nor criticized; so that sovereignty, like personality, was some indefinite power completely hidden by the very phenomena which it governed. But precisely the opposite is true; the self, like the sovereign, is a wholly natural reality which, while unique in its functions, is nevertheless continuous with a fluctuating environment.

3. It appears to me however that the implications of these principles, in their bearing first upon the relation of the self to itself—its consciousness of itself—and secondly on its relation to its environment, have not yet been clearly realized. For when we consider the underlying tendency of the entire evolution of consciousness it is easy to perceive that this evolution is directed always to an increasing measure of *control* or *dominance* of the environment, even while at the same time this capacity is based upon and operates through a continuous response to the environment; but in recent discussion the factor of responsiveness has been allowed unduly to conceal the still more fundamental character of dominating control. Certainly the earliest forms of consciousness present an almost completely passive responsiveness,

although the most recent research into the psychology of primitive animal forms shows that even at these low levels there exists a marked degree of truly spontaneous activity. But it is only necessary to contrast the higher animals with the lower to perceive this originally passive reaction steadily giving place to more and more active control, despite the despotic rule of instinct throughout the animal world; while the increasing mastery of mankind over his surroundings is a commonplace. But it is a commonplace which has fundamentally important implications; and it is only in the light of these that the actual character and status of personality are capable of being properly understood. For this persistent trend towards an ever completer dominance is really identical with the continuous evolution of the *ideational* capacity of mind—of the ability to form images and ideas, and to weave the latter into trains of thought.[1] If therefore we refuse to divorce human thought from the real universe—if we accept the idealistic principle that the very nature and function of thought keep it in the closest contact with reality[2]—then we may say that this ideational capacity of mind enables man to grasp the real universe, in a very literal sense of the term "grasp." The expression "intellectual grasp of a question" is of course familiar; but when it is freed from its generally abstract meaning, and when it is realized that it is

[1] This principle also governs the evolution of religion. *Cf. The Development of Religion*, chaps. ii, v. Also "Nature and Ultra-Nature," *The Monist*, vol. xxxv, p. 555.

[2] This subject is altogether too wide to be adequately discussed here. The standpoint is of course that of the Hegelian school, German and British. *Cf.* Dr. Bosanquet: "Thought is, in principle, in relation with the entire real universe" (*Mind*, vol. xxxi. p. 235).

precisely this " intellectual grasp " that has given civilization its present-day power over its surroundings—a power as yet only in its infancy—then we at once perceive that the " grasp of thought " is by no means an abstract affair, but is rather intensely real and effective.[1] In practical life, as I have just observed, it is impossible to imagine its limitations ; but this practical result is really based on the very nature of the human mind as a psychic system. For ideation—thought—intellect—intelligence—are in actuality never merely abstract and artificial, although they may, and indeed must, become so under certain conditions whose character is exhibited by the place occupied in modern life by mathematics, logic and their allied abstract sciences. On the contrary, these purely intellective attributes of mind are always and inseparably related to action, and it is only to the degree that they become more fully developed that our practical activity becomes properly effective.

This aspect of the relation between thought and action has recently been emphasized in Bergson's philosophy. Intellect, as he has insisted, is a tool or instrument, and is, as such, subordinate to activity ; we think in order to live, not live that we may think. All this is undoubtedly true ; but at the same time it appears to me that Bergson has misread the entire situation and has, in consequence, misplaced his whole emphasis. He has, in my opinion, presented Life as some vague and undirected advance whose nature cannot be adequately expressed in intelligible terms. For if this were possible, it is obvious that his fundamental principle

[1] It is instructive to note that the German term for " concept " —*Begriff*—is derived from the word which means to feel and handle—once again to " grasp " or " grip ".

that intellect always misrepresents and distorts reality would at once break down. But such a view of Life and of Evolution is radically false ; it is far more in agreement with the cloudy pseudo-mysticism of earlier thought than with the slowly clearing vision of modern philosophy.[1] The evolution of life, as I have already maintained, means the evolution of dominance or effective control of the environment ; this, again, can be attained only through the evolution of ideation, thought or intellect as one essential factor or aspect of the increasingly complex, yet at the same time increasingly definite, mind ; and finally, the evolution of mind, when thus regarded in its wholeness as a unified system, culminates in selfhood or personality. Thus Bergson's principle must be substantially modified so that the necessary emphasis falls in its proper place—not simply on Life, but on Thought as the effective factor in Life at all its highest levels ; we must say therefore that in order more and more effectively to live we must think both more extensively and more precisely. No doubt, as Mr. Bradley has insisted on the other hand, Thought is altogether transcended in the Absolute ; nevertheless at every stage below this it retains its character as Thought.

There is, in short, nothing more that is incomprehensible in the long evolution of the self as a psychical system than there is in that of the body as an organic material system. The first advance is as natural as the second, and psychology is just as competent to discover the psychic processes concerned as is biology to disclose the organic. It is true that in both spheres alike science

[1] I have criticized the entire Bergsonian standpoint, from the Hegelian position, in " The Failure of Bergonism," *The Monist*, vol. xxxiii. p. 219.

is only touching the fringes of its problems. But this ignorance must not be confused with unintelligibility, nor the profound complexity with totally inscrutable mystery; and it is then only necessary to expand our already attained results to discover further highly important attributes of selfhood.

For we may, I think, summarize the position here attained by saying that the self is not simply one definite and persistent system within the universe, but that it is (still further) an essentially *dominant* system; and its higher advance, in principle, always takes the form of a dominance ever wider and more effective. In this way its relation to the universe continuously changes, while at the same time its own nature becomes correspondingly transformed; and thus it gradually acquires both a more complete specific character—a fuller degree of internal unity—and a higher status arising from its greater power of efficient control over an expanding environment.

4. Three further points must be noted here. As I have observed already, there is nothing mysterious nor inexplicable about this changing relation of the self to the universe, always in the direction of an increasing dominance over an ever widening environment; rather is it a process wholly natural. Further, it becomes manifested equally (*a*) as the uninterrupted continuance of the entire earlier evolution of consciousness from its most primitive beginnings, (*b*) in the development of every powerful individual personality, as *e.g.* in art or commerce or politics, and (*c*) in the parallel advance of every great social group, whether national, artistic or religious. Finally, in all these instances alike the rising

development of selfhood is due, first to the appearance, and secondly to the continuous expansion, of the *ideational* aspect or capacity of mind.[1] But this capacity, on the other hand, must never be isolated from the mind as a whole, in such a way as to be regarded as *pure* intellect or merely *abstract* thought; on the contrary, it must always be most intimately connected in every possible way with all forms of feeling and of action. For mind—personality—selfhood—is always and essentially a continuous whole—an indestructible unity of thought with emotion and practice.

But it is always this ideational capacity, and this only, that enables the self to become conscious of its environment in a definitely systematic way—enables it, in other words, to perceive and know its surrounding world as this really exists. For thought, as I have maintained earlier in the present chapter, always tends to effect direct contact with reality; and not only tends to do this, but actually achieves this contact on an ever widening scale that has, in principle, no limits. On a much lower and more restricted level, the same end is attained in sense-perception;[2] and thought supplements human perception in all directions by revealing, in its entire system of ideas, the nature of reality as this exists beyond those limits where perception itself begins to fail us.

"Truth seems to me," Dr. Bosanquet has said, "to have no meaning unless (1) it is reality; (2) is in the form of ideas. It is the form which reality assumes when expressed through ideas in particular minds . . .

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 85.

[2] This is the standpoint of modern Realism, best expressed hitherto, in my opinion, by Professor Alexander. I may again refer to my own *Theory of Direct Realism*.

reality becomes truth when it takes ideal form" ;[1] and truth again, at least in one of its most important meanings, is the product of thought. Even if we add to this meaning the content of religion and of art as being, each in its own way, profoundly true, still this content demands intelligible form and expression in order to be communicated, if not to be properly apprehended. Nor does the constant occurrence of error vitiate this principle; for thought incessantly seeks to purge itself of error, and, to the degree that it becomes more systematic, it actually succeeds in so doing. Error, in fact, is not native to thought but inherently hostile; and again, even though thought is relational and discursive, and must therefore lose these characters in the Absolute and so cease to be thought,[2] nonetheless does it keep the human mind in direct contact with the real world, while at the same time its relations therewith are capable of creating a more and more comprehensive system of ideas and knowledge.

Feeling, on the other hand, taken purely as such, is not only a much more primitive mode of consciousness than systematic thought, but is further mainly passive; in the animal world, again, it is always controlled either by some nervous mechanism or by instinct;[3] and when the latter resigns its sway, its place in human experience must be taken by thought if the very intensity of feeling

[1] *Implication and Linear Inference*, p. 148 and note. "Ideal" here in its psychological and logical sense, not as the moral or æsthetic "ideal." *Cf.* also note 2, p. 85 *ante*.

[2] "When thought begins to be more than relational, it ceases to be mere thinking" (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 171). This however raises the problem of the degree to which relations may be subsumed under a complex unity.

[3] The question of the precise relation between instinct and mechanism is here irrelevant.

is not to lead to disaster. Similarly in the case of all practical activity; this again must be incessantly controlled by some system of ideas or concepts, and the more systematic these become the more efficient is our activity in every sphere alike—in commerce, in social affairs, and in art.[1]

Selfhood, then, is a reality whose evolution is characterized throughout by its advancing dominance of the environing world. Taken simply as a fact, this conclusion is obviously of high importance; but its further implications are more important still, as will appear in the following chapter.

[1] I have considered these points in fuller detail in *The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation*, pp. 131–145, and *The Development of Religion*.

CHAPTER VI

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ADVANCING DOMINANCE OF SELFHOOD

1. Thus the evolution of consciousness (to resume) finally takes the form of the evolution of selfhood or personality; and this again, the farther it proceeds, necessarily brings about the increasing dominance of the self as an active and highly effective factor in the universe. The basis of the connection between the self and its environment rests upon feeling—upon sensitivity and emotion; but it is its capacity for ideationally comprehending—"grasping"[1]—the actual nature of reality in a definitely systematic way that makes it ultimately dominant. Finally, this power of control by the self over its surroundings is manifested in every form of its practical action.

This general standpoint supplies the clue, in my opinion, to the solution of the very difficult problem of the relation of the self to the universe as a whole—of its specific status with reference to the whole of reality. It is unnecessary to do more than allude to the fundamental contrast between the ancient point of view, for which man was the descendant of the gods, or a little lower than the angels, with the modern standpoint that reveals him as an atom inhabiting an atom. At

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 86, n; also *A Theory of Direct Realism*, chap. xvi, "Feeling and Sense".

the same time it is extremely interesting to note the opinion recently expressed by Dr. Jeans, that "the extension of the time scale now proposed increases enormously the chance of solar systems being formed by tidal action . . . we can think of planetary systems as being, if not quite the normal accompaniment of a sun, at least fairly freely distributed in space"; [1] for this plainly increases the probability of the existence of finite intelligences analogous to our own.

But whatever may be the validity of this theory, it remains a patent fact that from the evolutionary viewpoint mind is a later product than matter; and not only so, but the material world presents itself both as the basis, and as the environment, of consciousness; while, as I have just argued, the essence of personality consists in its dominance equally over lower forms of psychical experience and over matter. It is impossible therefore, in my opinion, to dispense—at least from the philosophic standpoint—with the concept of levels of value—of degrees of reality and worth as inherent in the various forms of real being; and on all these grounds it is at least possible—though I should myself say that it is logically necessary—to accord to personality a relatively high status as compared with the previously existing realms of life and of matter.

For not only is its dominance, as contrasted with the passivity of response in the earlier and lower spheres,[2] thus essentially characteristic of the self, but this capacity is of such a nature that it is impossible for us to conceive

[1] *Nature*, vol. 114, p. 829.

[2] At the same time this passiveness is relative, for, as I have insisted throughout, every real is in some way or other dynamic. The issue depends on the relation between its own dynamic activity and that of other reals.

of any limits to its expansion. Alike in emotion, in knowledge, and in their resultant activities, there seem to be no bounds to the further evolution of consciousness, once this has assumed the form of the rational self; so that it appears possible, or even indeed necessary, for its ideational grasp of the nature of reality to develop further and further without meeting any insuperable barrier, apart of course from the final mystery of the how and why of the universe as such.[1] Obviously this principle cannot hold true of any individual self, unless that self is immortal; but apart from this consideration it is, I believe, fully justified both by the past history of knowledge and still more by the future promise and tendency of modern science.

I have already, however, pointed out that there are substantial scientific grounds for accepting the principle of individual immortality;[2] and it is on this basis therefore that my further consideration of the entire problem will rest. It will be useful, in the light of recent discussion, to put the question in the form—Is the self a mere adjective of the universe, or does it ever become a substantive, and thus acquire some measure of independence as against the Whole, or the Absolute, or God?[3] The self, it must be noted here, is always finite; but since I have already accepted the truth of personal immortality, it is obvious that "finite" cannot here mean limited in the duration of its existence in such a way that, at some time or other, the self

[1] I have dealt with this point in fuller detail in *The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation*, chap. xii, and *The Development of Religion*, chaps. v, vi.

[2] *Cf. ante*, pp. 76, 78, notes.

[3] The connection between "substantive" and the concept of "substance" is patent.

must cease to be; for such a meaning is excluded by the conditions of the problem. "Finite", then, means limited or incomplete not in time nor duration, but rather in nature or character. The self, that is to say, no matter how much it may become transformed in its advance to heightening levels, must always remain less than the Whole of being; it is always in contact with other forms of reality that are like itself finite; although at the same time every such finite real is also—necessarily—in contact with the infinite Whole or Absolute.

With reference to the Absolute, again, the question must be considered as to whether this term can be synonymous with God, so that, at this stage, the problem of their identity of meaning must be left open. Obviously this question is closely connected with the preceding, since it is equivalent to asking if any form of selfhood can be infinite in the sense of being complete—unlimited—and again not temporally but inherently.

2. The entire problem of the adjectival or substantival character of the self appears to me to turn upon the fundamental principle of the innate capacity of personality, as such, to attain an ever greater degree of dominance within the universe—to exercise an ever increasing influence, radiating from itself as an active focus or centre,[1] over other reals. But still further,

[1] But not as a mere geometrical point, as I have already sufficiently insisted (*ante*, p. 58); rather always as a complex and definite system. *Cf.* Professor Hobhouse: "There seems no theoretical limit to the plasticity of human purpose. No range is too vast, no consideration too remote, no correlation too complex to affect our action if occasion calls. We are nowhere finally stopped" (*Proc. Arist. Soc.*, vol. xviii. p. 476). I do not of course attribute my principle of individual immortality to Professor Hobhouse.

such a power depends upon the ability of the self to distinguish itself from, yet at the same time to identify itself with, these other reals, which, from this point of view, form its own environment. For as we have already seen in the previous chapter, the entire system which forms a personality is essentially a fluctuating system, now expanding so as to include within its own sphere some part of its previous environment, and now contracting upon itself in such a way that some elements of its internal content become objectively external to itself.[1]

It is however absolutely important here to observe that this contractive and expansive activity may be known by the self to be its own activity, even though, as I have pointed out repeatedly, it occurs in response to environmental changes; still it is never a merely *passive* response, but rather always conscious, deliberate, volitional. If I may cite a technical grammatical point, the principle here in question must be expressed not in the passive voice, but in the active; so that we must not say merely "the self becomes distinguished from," and "becomes identical with," its environment, but "the self *distinguishes itself* from," and "*identifies itself* with," the environment. We are not concerned, that is to say, with a merely mechanical and automatic change like the ebb and flow of the tide, or a rise and fall in temperature or volume, but with a (responsive) activity which is both fully cognized and volitionally directed by the self for itself. Here illustrations and analogies fail us simply because the situation is unique. We can

[1] *Cf.* reference *ante* to James, p. 80, n. 3, and Mr. Bradley, p. 82, n. 2. The spatial phraseology here, though necessary, is illustrative merely.

do no more than appeal either to our own experience or to that of our fellows, particularly in dealing with some crucial issue in life. A statesman *e.g.* preparing his policy, a general his plan of campaign, an artist his poem or picture or building, and then acquiring the relevant means and material for executing and realizing all these, plainly exhibit all the characteristics I wish to emphasize. Explicit consciousness of self and of environment as distinct from each other (though in varying degrees in each instance); of personal ideals and purposes on the one hand, and of external actualities, both helpful and hostile, on the other; subjective responsiveness to these objective conditions; all these together constitute the self's *distinction* of itself from its surroundings. And this, in all cases similar to those just referred to, is followed by practical action —by the acquisition and employment of the necessary material, the shaping of this in accord with personal ends and purposes, and finally the fuller expression of the personality in the successful attainment of these—in all this we see the deliberate *expansion* of the self, its conscious identification with environing objects and changes and situations, but always—and this is the vitally important feature—thus expressing and expanding and identifying itself by *dominating* its instruments and means, and this increasingly as each successive aim is achieved.

This general principle, further, is in no degree affected by the patent facts of failure or of partial attainment. For we are here concerned with the inherent nature and tendency of all personality to dominate its environment; and these, obviously, manifest themselves in the incessant struggle to succeed even when this struggle ends in defeat.

For in the first place this result of itself frequently stimulates the individual to further and more successful action; we are "baffled to fight better"; while in any case failure arises from the inadequacy of our cognition of, or our response to, the necessities of the occasion; and the self's demand for dominance is always present, even when it remains unsatisfied. Nor again is the situation materially altered by the fact that the entire activity may be largely due to some irresistible temperamental impulse or enthusiasm; for this simply brings into view the indestructible emotional side of personality, and makes no difference to the fact that the self is conscious of what is going on; very often, indeed, it intensifies this consciousness.

3. This then appears to me to be the fundamental feature in the ever changing relation between the typical individual and his environment:—the uninterrupted heightening of his dominance over that environment—apart, again, from incidental failure. But this development must from its very nature bring about a continuous, and in the end a radical, transformation of the dominating personality itself. For this, as we have already seen, is essentially a system which is marked off from its surroundings by no rigid barrier but by a boundary which is incessantly fluctuating. An illustration may make this somewhat clearer. The influence of an electromagnet over its surrounding field varies—contracts and expands—in its extent—rises and falls in its intensity at any given point—with the strength of the current; and we may here regard the magnet as itself unchanging[1] while its field of force varies.

[1] Of course its internal constitution changes with the current intensity.

Thus we obtain an obvious parallel to the dominating activity of the self, except that the self must never be looked upon as an unchanging central unit altogether distinct from its sphere of influence. This can be the case only with reference to the unimportant details of experience, though even here there is always some reaction within the individual, if only *e.g.* in the gradual formation of habits. But in all other aspects personality changes definitely, permanently, and often profoundly, simply because it merges itself more and more with its environment. This "merging", however, is always essentially active; it resembles, not the slow sinking and dissolution of a rock into a quagmire, but the increasing absorption of any enthusiast in his particular sphere of interest, within which he not only remains himself but actually expresses himself more and more fully.[1] According to the more recent physical theories, indeed, even the magnet is most accurately regarded from precisely the same point of view; for in a very literal sense the magnet—or any similar centre of physical energy—is inseparably one with its external field. "An electric charge is everywhere. The modification of the electro-magnetic field at every point of space at each instant . . . is another way of stating the same fact."[2] But every great statesman in mid-career, every artist and great social reformer, are concrete instances of the general principle with which we are here concerned. The increasing dominance of the immortal self over its

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 80. "You cannot possibly draw an absolute boundary line round any reals but spirits; and they have power explicitly to negative the boundary" (Dr. Bosanquet, *Proc. Arist. Soc.*, vol. xviii. p. 487).

[2] Professor A. N. Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature*, pp. 145, 146.

environment necessarily involves therefore the continuous advance in the degree of value—of importance—of reality—of that self, and this without any limitations. We are dealing here indeed not with two separate processes that are somehow contingently associated with one another, but with one and the same process which is going on as a part of the evolution of the whole universe and which always presents two inseparable aspects. As expressed in terms of the relation of the self to its environment—*i.e.* (in principle) to some limited sector of the universe—this process constitutes the increasing dominance of the self; while in terms of the relation of the changing individual to himself it becomes his unceasing rise in importance, in value and in reality; and as I have previously observed, the self is capable of becoming explicitly conscious of each of these its relations. It is then aware at one and the same time of its changing environment, of its own changing character, and of their changing interrelations; aware, further, not simply passively but always actively, so that it volitionally directs and modifies the entire process not, however, absolutely and independently, but in response to external influences and stimuli.[1]

4. This fundamental principle of the increasing dominance of selfhood enables us, I believe, to harmonize the

[1] From still another standpoint—the outcome of the intricate complexity of the entire situation—this constitutes the developing self-determination of the individual, and therefore his increasing freedom. With this however I have already dealt in *The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation*, chaps. ix–xii. I do not, of course, intend to exclude here the powerful influence of the subconscious and "unconscious" elements of personality. Normally, however, these remain subordinate.

opposing viewpoints expressed in the well-known discussion between Dr. Bosanquet and Professor Pringle-Pattison, the former insisting that the individual, in the end, must be an adjective of the universe, the latter that it must be a substantive; the former prepared to accept the self's transient existence, ending in its absorption within the universe, but also (I take it) its cessation *as* the individual self;[1] the latter emphasizing immortality not as inherent, but as depending upon its concordance with the nature and tendency of the Whole.

I have already definitely accepted the principle of individual immortality, with the proviso (which meets Professor Pringle-Pattison's demands) that mere temporal continuance is never the final issue, but rather the intrinsic character of the persisting self. It is indeed possible, I think, to go farther than this and to hold that Time, as we experience and conceive of it, is somehow transcended in absolute reality;[2] and in that case, obviously, immortality loses its temporal character completely. Nor can I hope to add much that is new to what has already been said by earlier writers on these subjects except insofar as the principle of the increasing dominance of selfhood is concerned. But when we keep this standpoint in view I think the following implications necessarily emerge.

In the first place, the self—like every other real—always remains in direct and unbroken contact with the whole of reality which, obviously, environs and transcends it. But this contact is never merely static and passive. The self and the whole do not simply coexist;

[1] *Proc. Arist. Soc.*, vol. xviii. p. 491: "I could not bring myself to hold finite selves to be necessarily eternal or everlasting units". *Cf.* p. 506: "While we serve . . ."

[2] *Cf. Direct Realism*, chap. xviii, "A Realist Theory of Time".

they also co-operate; and the whole penetrates and saturates the self insofar as this is stimulated and influenced from its environment; but this again is true of every real alike. In the material world,[1] then, every entity is an element in the whole, so that to regard it as independent and separate, as we must do for purposes of analysis and scientific investigation, is—philosophically—an abstraction; every physical entity, therefore, is no more than an adjective of the whole, though it always possesses, of course, its own specific character. This conclusion, in other words, does not reduce reality to featureless homogeneity by abolishing familiar distinctions, but must be held in the light of the patent heterogeneity of the universe. But when we turn from such material reals to immaterial personality, we find a *conscious* real—again undoubtedly an element in the whole, but an element that is conscious of itself, of its universe, and of their changing interrelations in such a way that it can so direct the course of this change as always in some measure to dominate its environment. The self is therefore not merely a dynamic and conscious real, but it is also, to some degree, a self-determining real, capable—within certain limits—of freely controlling the evolution both of itself and of its surroundings. The governing conditions of its existence—of its own place and status within the whole—are thus radically different from that of every physical real. If then the latter is an adjective of the universe, the self must be an adjective of a completely different order. But I have maintained further that the continuous advance which is characteristic of personality—its incessant self-expansion and elevation to a higher level—must bring it nearer, in

[1] I have already observed that my ontology is realistic.

principle though never in actuality, to the Absolute, which is, obviously, absolutely substantive. It follows therefore that the self, whilst remaining always adjectival, must at the same time acquire more and more a substantive [1] character which is, however, only attained through the constant interaction between itself and its environment which is one phase of universal evolution. Personality therefore is both adjective and substantive at once; as compared with the whole it is adjectival, but so far as it is self-determiningly and increasingly dominant it is substantival. The issue is always one of proportion or emphasis or relativity.[2] If the individual is not immortal, then, in consonance with the view which contrasted him with the infinite vastness of the universe, he is little more than bare adjective, as Dr. Bosanquet has contended. On the other hand, immortality brings with it the opportunity of transcending the primary adjectival stage through the gradual acquirement of an increasing substantivity; and this I take to be the standpoint of Professor Pringle-Pattison.[3] But at the same time the entire advance of selfhood originated from within the whole, while its final fate is determined, in my own opinion, by its concord or discordance with the self-developing process of the whole; [4]

[1] I have already referred to the obvious connection between "substantive" and "substance". The former term, however, must not therefore be interpreted here in the sense of material substance; the conscious self is essentially immaterial.

[2] Not here in the new scientific sense of this term.

[3] "Not I, such as I experience myself to be, which can be conceived as the end of the Absolute; it is the spirit with its infinite potentialities and aspirations and the consciousness of its own imperfections" (*Proc. Arist. Soc.*, vol. xviii. p. 524).

[4] *Cf. The Development of Religion*, chap. xii, on the good and evil self.

so that we must also accept, but with these vital qualifications, Dr. Bosanquet's position that "the spiritual individual has a solid claim to substantive being only indirectly. . . . It is a substance and an ultimate subject, but not in its own right"; [1] by which is meant, I take it, that the substantive rank of personality is acquired only as the result of its interaction with the universe.

5. But the methods of treatment which this question has received from both thinkers appear to me to share a common defect that is best described as the lack of emphasis on the principle of the *increasing dominance* of personality. Thus Dr. Bosanquet insists on subordination—"the character of being something which has its main being and value as a qualification of the whole which includes it". To this Professor Pringle-Pattison opposes "individuation—the central and most characteristic feature of the cosmic evolution", pointing out at the same time that "any individual thing qualifies and characterizes by its existence and character the nature of the whole to which it belongs".[2]

But while it is certainly necessary to lay our stress on "qualification" it is nevertheless insufficient. We must go further, and ask what is the nature of this "qualification"? And then we find that in the case of personality this gradually changes its own nature in virtue of the principle of its advancing dominance, so that a real measure of self-determination or freedom is at last acquired. But complete self-determination—absolute freedom—unfettered dominance—is enjoyed only by

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 480, 497.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 489, 511, 508.

the Absolute. If then we employ the term "qualification" at all it must mean that selfhood always shares to some degree the essential nature of the whole; it "qualifies" this therefore as a substantive, though never of course as a completely independent substantive.

But in the same way the alternative idea of "individuation" is scarcely a fully adequate concept, because it is too passive. The term itself, as I have already observed, denotes wholeness—unity—indivisibility;[1] and these attributes, merely as such, are obviously possessed by unconscious and non-dominant reals, such as all the products of great art. It is true of course that these objects exert a marked influence and have, in a sense, an environment of which they are the centre or focus. But this influence arises solely from their being objects of æsthetic experience—stimuli of that special character which appeals to the sense of beauty; and one main element in this appeal springs from that type of "individuation" that constitutes artistic wholeness, with its capacity for satisfying one deep necessity of human nature. If again we refer these products to their origin in the mind of the artist, and regard this as being the true source of their "individuation", we simply raise our problem anew as concerned with creative, and therefore dominant, personality.

Professor Pringle-Pattison's concept of individuation, then, as "the central feature of cosmic evolution" is in itself seriously inadequate. It must be added that true individuation can exist only in a dynamic self that is capable of dominating its environment in such a way as first to maintain its own individuality, and secondly to confer an allied type of individuality upon certain

[1] *Ante*, p. 73.

of the results of its dominating activity. For this, plainly, is what every artist does in so handling his varied materials as to weld them into his final creation. But since artistic beauty is always predominantly sensuous he must operate throughout upon the relatively simple world of physical reality; nonetheless both his relation to this material world and the character of his results exemplify the far more complex and therefore more difficult activity of every creator of a philosophy, a nation or a religion. These latter are the manifestations of the dominance of the self over both the unconscious and the conscious —the physical and the psychical—elements in its whole environment; and the transforming effects of the internal reaction upon the creative self are to be read in all history and biography. The individual is seen to gain a substantivity—a spiritual substantiality, if the suggestion is not too paradoxical—which in its essential nature, despite its narrowly restricted sphere, is surely akin to the self-determined dominance of the Absolute.

6. The issue then, to repeat, is essentially one of emphasis; and exclusive or exaggerated insistence in either direction at once involves serious error. To regard personality as completely adjective is to reduce it to the same level as material things; as completely substantive, again, is to elevate it to the rank of the Absolute. "We turn our truth into sheer error when we maintain that my self is an independent substantive to which the rest of the world belongs somehow as an adjective, or to which other self-sufficient Reals are externally related. Such a position cannot be defended . . . My self may rightly be called a necessary and even an indispensable element in the world. But its ultimate substantiality and closed

privacy seem to be no more than false inferences." [1] But it seems to me, further, that the principle of advancing dominance throws some little light on the problem which Mr. Bradley has always maintained to be ultimately inexplicable—" the immanence of the Absolute in finite centres, and of finite centres in the Absolute, I have always set down as inexplicable ".[2] In a certain sense this is obviously and undeniably true ; for the nature of the whole, and of its relation to its elements, must ever remain beyond human understanding. But on the other hand we can plainly discern the evolutionary process within the Whole ; and this, as I said at the beginning of the present chapter, culminates in finite centres that are personal. And despite the unquestionably low level of the human self, it must still be recognized that selfhood possesses the *inherent* capacity of attaining an ever greater degree of dominance within its universe. But dominance is one at least of the attributes of the Absolute, which is, as Mr. Bradley himself has described it, " an all-embracing, supra-rational, absolute experience ". [3] It will perhaps be objected that this description, as it stands, is too abstract—is expressed too much in terms of logic and psychology such as " relation " and " experience ". But even if, for argument's sake, this is conceded, it still remains possible to interpret the expression in the light of all our scientific knowledge, with its revelation of the universally *dynamic* nature of

[1] Mr. Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, pp. 248, 249. With reference to my own general position it is instructive to note that the author continues : " When I hear that in the Absolute all personal interests are destroyed, I think I understand on the contrary how this is the only way and the only power in and by which such interests are really safe ".

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 246. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 249.

the Whole as irresistibly urging each of its elements onward in the current of its own advance; and this constitutes absolute dominance. To myself, then, this seems to make it in some slight measure understandable that, since the nature of the universe is throughout definitely and systematically organized, its finite organs should in due time acquire a form which exhibits, in however minute a degree, the characteristic dominance of the source whence they sprang; which again, in virtue of this common attribute, must itself be immanent in each and all of them to an ever heightening degree.

7. The difficulties of the concept of immanence, whether in the form of an immanent energy or deity or Absolute, are proverbial. But they seem to me to vanish to some extent if we recognize that the essential nature of the Absolute—whatever may be true of deity—is to be completely self-determined and therefore completely free.[1] If then the Absolute is immanent in every one of its finite centres—in every distinguishably real entity—this its essentially free nature must become manifested there, so far always as the conditions of the situation permit; and this we actually find to be the truth. For the entire course of natural evolution, when taken in all its main aspects—physical, vital, mental, social—plainly exhibits the steadily increasing attainment by the constituent reals of a self-determining activity. In the material world this type of activity is at its lowest and most rudimentary level, so that this world presents itself throughout as in the grip of causation—of invariable sequence and connection—of mechanical necessity; and yet every atom, every crystal, every magnet, possesses

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 100 n.

a perfectly organized internal structure that enables it to preserve its own individuality, meagre though this is, and in virtue of this to respond to environing forces—to take its due place in the eternal stream of causes and effects.[1] But as we pass from the world of purely physical energy to that of life, and thence to mind both as individual and as social, we perceive this mechanical necessity not being destroyed but transforming itself by processes wholly natural into internal self-determination or freedom.[2] In all these higher levels of reality, therefore, the essentially free nature of the ever immanent Absolute becomes more and more fully manifested. The greater the degree of this immanence, then, the higher is the degree of true freedom—just as we have already found the attribute of dominance to be higher. The two capacities of freedom and dominance, in fact, always exist together, or are rather the two inseparable aspects of the inherent nature of every real of a high order—freedom denoting its power to control its own activities, and dominance its exertion of this power over its environment; and since every such real can exist only in close and constant contact with this environment it is plain that its dominance and its freedom must rise and fall together. To state the same principle in a negative form, the less free any entity is, the more is it under the sway of environing influences—the less, that is, is its own dominance.

[1] This is true of every physical object in the ordinary sense of this word. But when we turn to purely physical systems of the largest and highest order, such as solar or stellar systems, we there find realities that appear to be throughout self-determined, and so to be a kind of material Absolute. This very suggestive fact appears to me to be overlooked.

[2] This self-transformation arises directly from the continuous advance in the degree of complexity of organization. *Cf.* reference in note, p. 100.

The immanence of the Absolute, then, can be evaded by no real whatever.[1] But once its proper character is clearly recognized, this universal immanence need not be regarded as repugnant nor hostile to the nature of the human self. For it is always the immanence of an absolute freedom that is ever striving, within and through each finite personality, more effectively to make itself as complete as possible. But any finally complete realization, from the very nature of the situation, must obviously be impossible. The immanence of the Absolute throughout the universe as it actually exists necessarily implies, in other words, the eternal transcendence of the Absolute as referred to every finite self. Its immanence within, and its transcendence of, the self, are therefore not two separate principles accidentally conjoined; much less are they exclusively opposed to each other. The latter is really the logical corollary of the former; but not, again, in the formally abstract sense that every form of the first idea necessarily and correlatively implies the second. For it is often argued either that every concept of transcendence at once negatives, or that it includes, some idea of immanence; but this formal method is totally inadequate to the solution of our problem. It may be added that it must be always inadequate as applied to the consideration of any complex situation whatever; for it involves the misuse of that most effective —in its own peculiar sphere—of all logical instruments —the appeal to the *a priori*. Such an appeal can be successful, however, only when all the conditions of the given problem are relatively simple and definite; whence it follows that a principle may be true *a priori* for one

[1] This is equally true of universal determination. *Cf. The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation*, pp. 112, 262.

mind and not for another; and this, of course, is what we find actually to be the case. Many mathematical results, *e.g.* are *a priori* true to every expert in the subject, but not in the least so to the youthful student; while to a Newton or an Einstein much is clear *a priori* that is quite obscure even to the expert. This is universally true—in Law and in Art as in every science; it all depends on how clear and definite the entire subject has become to the investigating mind; so that the value and effectiveness of the *a priori* is the result not of magic but of mastery.

But it is quite obvious that the purely *a priori* method must be wholly out of place in its bearing upon the most complex of all possible problems—the nature of the Absolute and its relation to finite selves. The issues of immanence and transcendence therefore must be considered not in the light of the merely formal meaning of these terms themselves, but on the basis of our fullest knowledge of the actual nature of the universe within which finite selves exist and develop, and which, regarded in its infinite wholeness,[1] is the Absolute; and its nature, as I have already repeatedly argued, is to be at once eternally dynamic and absolutely free. Its immanence within the self, then, must imply that the self, by its own properly directed striving and effort, attains an ever greater freedom and a wider dominance. But this process is going on within a universe that is infinite and inexhaustible; every such expansion of the self therefore, reacting as it must at once do upon its already transcendent environment, must maintain and continually heighten this transcendence. The wealth of the universe,

[1] The term "infinite wholeness" is self-contradictory only when "infinite" is taken to mean "unending". Here however it has its true and classic meaning of perfect.

to use some kind of illustration, is thus eternally increased by that very activity of the self which adds to its own internal power and resources; just as the expanding knowledge of every scholar stimulates the expansion of knowledge as a whole, or the legitimate commercial operations of a financier enrich society.

It is further possible, however, to express the general principle of the inherent dominance of personality in a still more definite and detailed form. I shall next consider therefore the manner in which this dominance is exercised within, and exerted upon, the self's material environment.

CHAPTER VII

MECHANISM AS ESSENTIAL TO THE DOMINANCE OF MIND

1. It is then essential that the principle of the immanence of the Absolute within every finite real should be interpreted, in its special bearing upon personality, as the immanence of an absolute freedom. For apart from this conclusion it is almost inevitable that the activity of the universe will be regarded as manifested in and through an instrument which, although certainly conscious, is nevertheless wholly passive; the self, in other words, is reduced to the level of a helpless mechanical object—the classic difficulty, of course, of the concept of immanence as such. The difficulty is a very real and serious one; and it can be removed only by recognizing that in conscious personality it is essentially the *freedom* of the Absolute that has there actualized itself, and has thus reached a certain level of attainment that makes it almost permissible to say that every developed personality is itself an "absolute" in miniature; while the more it develops the more absolute it becomes. For within certain limits every self is obviously absolutely free—to take an extreme case, it is absolutely free to destroy itself in deliberate suicide;[1] nothing whatever will hinder it doing so—except itself; and just as it is

[1] That is of course as human; it may still continue to exist as immortal.

thus free to destroy itself, so it is equally free to develop itself. The limits of this characteristic freedom may be —and in actual life they undeniably are—extremely narrow—that is as relative to the nature and extent of the whole environment. But the fundamental point here is not the narrowness of these limits, but the reality of the freedom that exists within them. So far as it extends this freedom is absolutely real, and is, further, capable under proper conditions of illimitable expansion ; [1] and thus the immanence of the Absolute within conscious selfhood means the very reverse of passive mechanical necessity.

Similarly, again, with regard to transcendence, which is so often taken to imply that selfhood is only an unreal or purely phenomenal attribute with no basis whatever in the ultimate nature of reality. Here it is the principle of unbroken continuity that is ignored ; and when this is given its proper emphasis, the transcendence of the Absolute is seen to mean not that reality is *behind* all phenomena, in the sense of being concealed by them, or severed from them by an unbridgeable chasm, but that it is always *beyond* phenomena even while it remains continuous with them, and so includes each and all of them within itself. As thus continuous, reality is comprehensive ; and as transcendent, it is all-comprehensive

[1] Four walls do not a prison make . . .
My mind to me a Kingdom is.

On the other hand the minor truth must be remembered that some minimum of freedom is always present even in the material world, where it is represented by the characteristic constitution and reactions of the given object which fit it to respond to certain stimuli and not to others. Thus it is formally permissible to say that a magnet is " free ", insofar as its constitution debars any definite reaction to many non-magnetic influences.

We have just seen that its immanence within the finite self means the activity therein of a freedom which is in principle unlimited ; but the final standard and ultimate criterion of this freedom are to be found only in the Absolute as transcendent of every finite self. Not only therefore is personality continuous with the whole, but it also possesses a definite character whose highest type exists nowhere short of the Absolute itself. As regarded therefore from the standpoint of the two combined, the self is seen to possess potential attributes of high positive worth and value.

It is frequently argued however that it is logically impossible to assign to the Absolute even the highest characters which we can conceive. For even at their best, it is contended, these must all remain finite, limited, imperfect, and inapplicable therefore to the Whole ; a standpoint adopted, under one form or another, by Spinoza and Lotze, Mansel and Bradley, Spencer and Bosanquet—an elevated scepticism negating much of their positive philosophy. But all arguments of this type appear to me to rest on some degree of misapprehension of the true implication of such terms as truth, knowledge, beauty and goodness. All of these, it may be said, necessarily imply struggle and development ; and this at once contradicts any adequate concept of deity or absoluteness. Now it is undeniable that the goodness of all finite beings implies a moral struggle against evil which, as evil, is real. Only through such a struggle—only by its own conquest of evil—can the good self be created ; and in very much the same way knowledge or wisdom is attained through the arduous removal of error. Similarly for every one of the most valuable factors in finite experience ; under many diverse

modes, one and the same process continues throughout, and apparently without any limitation in principle. But while all this is undeniable, there seems to me to be a fundamental distinction here that has been disregarded. For although evil is real, it is at the same time relative and negative, since its being consists in active opposition to a good which in itself is positive.

Goodness, in other words, is in its constant tendency and essential nature absolute, not wholly and purely relative. But this implies that the real nature of goodness cannot lie completely and exhaustively in the moral struggle against evil; so that although this struggle is an element inseparable from the development or creation of goodness, still it cannot be the whole of goodness. The situation is thus more accurately described by saying that moral conflict is a factor in the evolution or creation of goodness, not of goodness itself; and this again means that the good, strictly as such, is the outcome, result or consequence of the moral struggle. In the same way knowledge and beauty, as positive, arise out of the effort to conquer ignorance and ugliness; so that they, likewise, are not exhaustively identical with this effort.

If this is true then, there is nothing that is logically contradictory in the concept of perfect goodness, or perfect knowledge or wisdom, as wholly independent of struggle and development. These characteristics, further, are attributes of a perfect personality; and thus we attain the concept, which as a concept is completely logical, of a transcendent self. But this further implies an important change in the meaning of "transcendent"; for this should signify, not as it usually does, transcendent *of* goodness, but rather transcendent *in* goodness (or any allied attribute). From this point of

view, then, the transcendent self is not ethically neutral; it is not *beyond* goodness but simply *supreme* (or perfect or infinite) in goodness as this itself appears, however ineffectually, in human experience. This conclusion, I think, is not without earlier philosophic parallels; for it recalls on the one hand Spinoza's "substance consisting in infinite attributes" and on the other Mr. Bradley's principle that all appearances are conserved within the real.[1]

I shall now consider the further implications of this summary of the nature of selfhood, taken, as it must always be, in relation to its environment. In the first place, its value is a matter of degree, and is far higher than that of the qualities of the physical world. The contrast between the material and the psychical, indeed, may at this stage of my argument be regarded as equivalent to a philosophic dualism; and the still more fundamental principle of their ultimate continuity must not be interpreted as any attempt to resolve mind into matter or matter into mind. On the contrary, their widely different natures contribute something to the total evolutionary process which is in each case unique. For the physical order constitutes the persisting and definite structural basis upon which the freedom of the psychical operates; and thus material things are as it were the ready-made tools or instruments of the purposive mind, without which its own ends would become impossible to attain and preserve, as is obvious equally in the details of everyday life and throughout the wider domains of knowledge, art and religion. Each of these spheres possesses its own distinctive *material* aspect which is indispensable though subordinate; and the too common

[1] *Cf.* p. 62 *ante*.

tendency to neglect or to despise this aspect is altogether mistaken. For it is the sole means whereby the requisite precision of adjustment and delicacy of expression are achieved and maintained; every scientific apparatus, every picture and symphony and building, are obvious instances of this which quite clearly show, still further, that such mechanical precision and definiteness can rarely be carried too far.[1]

But not only are the physical and the psychical thus deeply contrasted; the self must also retain its consciousness of this contrast, as it exists between itself and its environment, both as the basis and the criterion of its knowledge of itself, and as the means towards the attainment of its continuously developing purposes. This principle is both wider and more definite than the familiar truth that consciousness of self always implies consciousness of the not-self, since it emphasizes the fact that the physical nature of much of the not-self must be clearly recognized and its significance duly appreciated. At the same time, as I have pointed out in an earlier chapter,[2] the essential nature of personality is such that it is always capable of surmounting this distinction between itself and its world in such a way that the boundary line between them is constantly fluctuating, the final result being the continuous self-expansion of personality so as to bring within its own inner realm more and more of the external, and it may be even foreign and hostile, environment. Again the career of a great statesman and the history of

[1] I may refer to the consideration of this subject from a somewhat different standpoint in *The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation*, chap. xii, "Consciousness and Self-Determination", with reference to the evolutionary limitations of the material world.

[2] *Ante*, p. 99, n. 1.

a nation are instances which plainly exemplify the principle operative in every developing individuality without exception. The ultimate outcome is an ever higher unity between the expanding self and its simultaneously expanding world, the first as consciously[1] dominating the entire situation, and the second as at once the indispensable instrument and the widening sphere of this dominance.

2. Thus the intangible distinction—the fluctuating boundary line—between the psychical self and the physical environment is nevertheless fundamental and real; it must always persist if personality is to exist in the universe as we experience it. This is true equally of human and of any type of superhuman personality; for consciousness, as it further advances, must still remain definitely organized in some way that is akin, in principle, to human consciousness; it must present aspects that are similar or analogous to feeling, knowledge and action in the sense, at least, that they fulfil similar or analogous functions, constitute a similar unity, and achieve similar results. This suggestion can certainly not be ruled out in advance as inadmissible or inconceivable. For it simply expresses the further evolution of consciousness in accordance with the same principle that has governed its evolution hitherto from the level of primitive animal life to that of humanity; nor, again, has humanity, as such, exhausted its own possibilities. Once more the principle of continuity must be taken into account; and this means that although higher forms of

[1] But associated with its explicit consciousness there are always highly important subconscious and "unconscious" factors; the psychological details are however irrelevant here.

personality may—and doubtless will—transcend the existing human type to a far greater degree than this transcends the mind of an insect, they will nevertheless present aspects common, in principle, with those of humanity ; just as this, in its turn, is indissolubly united to the consciousness of its whole animal ancestry.[1] To this I need only add first that the fundamental importance of ideation—of thought and conception—must continue to be emphasized, and secondly that the fact of individual immortality, if not definitely accepted, must not be excluded as *a priori* impossible. The conditions of post-human experience are of course unknown, and I prefer to make no appeal whatever to spiritualistic phenomena. But on the other hand it is not permissible, I think, to exclude in advance the possibility that that experience will somehow still be related to the physical universe even though totally new aspects of it become cognized.

3. It is only in the light of all these considerations taken together that my next point can be satisfactorily dealt with ; and this concerns the universal mode in which the fundamental distinction, or even opposition, between the psychic self and its physical environment is gradually overcome as the self exerts that progressive dominance which we have seen to be its inherent attribute. This dominance, then, always takes the form of so arranging and ordering the constituents of the material environment as to constitute some type of mechanism ; and until this result has been brought about, no matter in how ele-

[1] *Cf.* " It is the fundamental doctrine of (Hegel's) whole system that reality is essentially spirit. And there seems no reason whatever to accuse him of supposing that spirit could exist except as persons " (Dr. McTaggart, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 5). *Cf.* also *Direct Realism*, p. 266, n. *.

mentary a manner, the control of the self over its surroundings can scarcely be manifested at all. Further, such mechanism inevitably tends to become in the first place continually more complex,[1] and in the second more automatic or autonomous—more independent, that is to say, of the direct control of mind ; these two characters, I think, are patent throughout the long history of human invention. The term "mechanism" is here employed in its widest possible meaning, so as to denote the simplest tools as well as intricate machinery, and with reference to its governing principles rather than its specific details. These details, however, as I have already insisted, are always of supreme importance ; for it is only by their means that the principles just referred to can effectively operate and make themselves *fully* manifest. Insofar therefore as the requisite details of mechanical structure prove to be inadequate and defective, so far are the basal principles obscured or even defeated, as is becoming increasingly obvious with the fast advancing delicacy of mechanical devices and adjustments.

It is most usual, of course, to regard the infinitely various types of modern machinery as instances of mechanism in its truest sense. But these are really only the cases in which the general principle of mechanism is expressed and observed most easily, and the general application of the term must logically be extended much further. Biology, for example, is quite justified in speaking of the mechanisms of organic structure ;[2] and

[1] A minor but still important feature is that mechanisms, despite this growing intricacy of their detailed construction, at the same time tend to become simpler when regarded as wholes —they fulfil their purpose, that is, more and more directly and economically.

[2] *Cf. e.g.* below, p. 140, n. 2.

we may also, I believe, profitably adopt this standpoint in Psychology and refer to mechanisms of mind such as memory, habit, association, and similar automatic—or even unconscious—processes ; and here it must be clearly recognized that the efficiency of every mind, despite its inherent freedom, always depends to a very high degree upon the efficiency of these its mechanical aspects. Precisely the same holds true, in yet another direction, of practical life in many of its most important relations. Thus it is frequently said that a duty or action is performed " merely mechanically " ; and the " merely " here indicates an attitude of disparagement which is, in the main, quite justifiable. But on the other hand it is equally true, though it is often forgotten, that many of the highest functions of modern social activity must possess a basis that is almost wholly mechanical, and without which they altogether fail to attain their purpose. Commerce, education, government, even religion, are all coming to depend more and more upon the rapid, regular, precise and efficient performance of certain relevant activities in a way that is, in principle, thoroughly identical with the coordinated and invariable movements of any intricate modern machine ; and thus they are " mechanical " in the best sense of this term. In the same way our whole civilization, in many of its aspects, rests at bottom upon our complex machinery ; so that every machine finds its real end and explanation in the indispensable contribution that it makes to the carrying on of civilized life. It only requires a severe snowstorm to make this absolutely clear ; just as it is illustrated by the disturbance of the equally delicate mechanisms of international finance which follows every great strike or threat of war ; and the chief merit of many of our business and government

officials is precisely their capacity for partially suppressing their independent individuality and so converting themselves into mere mechanical instruments for carrying out a given policy.

Thus all these patent features of human life express in widely diverse ways the general principle that selfhood can effectively exert its dominance over its material environment only by arranging physical objects into mechanisms; and when, as in the case of the heads of many social groups, this personal dominance extends not only over matter but also over other selves, then these again often become as it were additional parts of the whole machine. This is true both individually, as in the case of the great inventor or high official, and socially, since these subordinate personal activities merely subserve some wider social purpose; they form the mechanical means whereby the general mind indicates and achieves its ends. This principle, again, is not vitiated by the frequent failure of such mechanisms; for we are here concerned not with incidental factors but with the fundamental *tendency* that is always at work, and which manifests itself equally in the overcoming of this failure always by means of still more efficient mechanisms; and it must again be noticed that their greater efficiency implies still higher intricacy, delicacy, and (what is most important of all) *autonomy*—independence of constant and direct control.

The term "mechanism", then, is here employed to denote the ordered arrangement, which must always be as exact and efficient as the conditions of the case permit, of things[1] in such a way that they must co-operate in some

[1] Or of persons, who are then practically regarded as things for some particular purpose; their complete personality, in

definite manner ; and this definiteness of function, again, is always raised to the highest possible level. The cooperation of the various parts may be either direct or indirect ; the continuous evolution of mechanism, indeed, actually implies an always greater degree of indirectness which becomes manifested in the ever increasing complexity of structure. But notwithstanding this constantly advancing complexity, the ordered arrangement always constitutes a true unity insofar as the action of every part is essential to the proper working of the whole, whose efficiency need not, of course, be altogether suspended by the defect of any given factor, since these are not all of equal importance ; still it must always be adversely affected to some degree.

Such is the ideal form—the governing principle—of every physical mechanism. It is, obviously, rarely achieved in actual machines, though it may possibly exist in many natural mechanisms ; and it is certainly always aimed at, consciously or unconsciously, by inventors and constructors. So far, again, as human beings become engaged in purely mechanical activities and thus descend to the level of mere additions to some material mechanism (as is proved by the uninterrupted substitution of machines for men) so far do they deprive themselves of the inherent freedom of mind. For it is, in principle, wholly unnatural for any mind to act *purely* mechanically, as is coming to be more clearly recognized in our social theory ; the ultimate result is a degradation

other words, becomes limited in some direction or other, insofar as they cease to exert initiative and so act as mere instruments. This limitation at once becomes obvious wherever strict discipline is necessary.

of personality that culminates in virtual slavery, whatever name it may actually bear.[1]

4. If now we generalize this principle of the relation between the dominant personality and its physical environment, we obtain a result which, in its bearing upon the status of mind in the universe, is of fundamental importance. For it implies that every material mechanism, as such and in its essential characters, is in the end the expression of the activity of mind—the manifestation of a form of reality which is, in principle if not in detail, one in its nature with the highest types of human experience. For mechanism is always the mode in which the dominance of some mind over some part of the material world has operated and expressed itself; and here two further points arise. The *essence* of mechanism, in the first place, lies not in the manufacture of the requisite constituents, although this is, taken in itself, of vital importance; its true essence—its fundamental nature—is to be found only in the ordered *arrangement* of these parts so that they must cooperate within a single unity; manufacture therefore is always subordinate to, and dictated by, the ultimate systematic arrangement.

Secondly, I have refrained as yet from using the term "purpose" in this connection, because I do not at this stage wish to imply that purpose is absolutely essential to mechanism. In ordinary life it undoubtedly is neces-

[1] At the same time, all true freedom must be ordered freedom. It appears to me that the most difficult of all future social problems will arise from the necessity of harmonizing the freedom of the individual with the insistent demand for the more rigid organization of social activities which inevitably springs from the growing complexity of civilization.

sary; but the question here is as to whether purpose is always necessary. It is, I think, easily conceivable that mechanisms may be constructed for no specific purpose whatever, unless it be just to prove that they can be so constructed—some complex arrangement, *e.g.* that works perfectly and yet does and produces nothing; still even this would plainly exhibit, though in a distorted way, the dominance of mind over its material surroundings.

But before discussing this subject in general terms I may point to two further highly significant features of modern civilization. The first is the constant tendency, already mentioned, to replace human activity more and more by mechanical contrivances. No doubt this has serious economic consequences; but these are not relevant to our present problem, which is concerned with what seems to me the patent and inevitable tendency of the social mind of to-day—and still more of to-morrow—thus to manifest its essential nature in expanding its dominion over its universe. The second feature is connected with that rapidly increasing automatic *complexity* of modern machinery to which I have previously referred, together with the logical implications of the contrast between simplicity and intricacy of structure and function.

Here the essential point is that, to the observer, every simple type of machine *immediately* betrays both the activity and the capacity of its constructive mind; we pass with ease and directness from the resultant mechanism to the originative personality. But on the other hand, the higher and more skilful the inventive mind —the more far-reaching its aims and the completer its knowledge—then the more extensive and at the same time more delicate and intricate become the mechanical

devices and adjustments which it adopts in order to achieve its ends. This is obvious in the case of actual machinery itself, as *e.g.* with every great inventor ; but it is equally patent in all those enormous social mechanisms such as can be controlled only by a master mind, as in some vast modern business concerns or great government departments. If now we regard such a familiar situation from a somewhat different and unusual standpoint, we are at once compelled to recognize that when mechanism, whether physical or social, thus attains so wide a range and so high a degree of automatic complexity, it not only expresses and manifests the constructive personality, but it also at the same time very effectively *conceals* this personality, as such, from the eyes of every observer whose own mental capacity is of a distinctly lower order and who is therefore accustomed to much simpler instruments, or it may be indeed to none at all. The true significance of this consideration has not hitherto, I believe, been adequately recognized ; and it is no doubt extremely difficult, in an age and country where everyone is more or less familiar with mechanical appliances and in which everyday life is profoundly influenced by scientific discovery, to realize the attitude that is instinctively adopted by minds of a more elementary type towards complex automatic mechanisms. But by a savage, and often by a young child, a gun or clock or steamer is regarded, not as the material—and therefore in itself unintelligent—product of a mind, but rather as somehow alive or magical—that is, in principle, as possessing a personality or *quasi*-personality of its own whose nature, however, is totally inexplicable ; but this again means that he remains blind to the real method whereby the mechanism operates—ignorant, in other words, of its

exact relationship to an intelligence. If, on the other hand, he becomes able accurately to trace out the long series of purely automatic interconnections of any extremely complex machine, once more does he fail to detect at any point whatever the *direct* action of a controlling mind. The mechanism is certainly no longer "alive", not a kind of god; but on the other hand, it has become a *pure* mechanism and nothing more; and in both cases alike the ultimate result is the same—the very complexity and automatic activity of the machine have most effectively concealed from his simple intellect the existence and nature of that far higher type of mind to which the mechanism, *as* a mechanism, is wholly due, and whose capacity its mechanical excellence itself best expresses. If a curious and intelligent savage, for example, or a citizen of some long vanished nation, were to observe the silent and automatic working of a modern engineering plant, or a wirelessly directed fleet of airships, or to view from an aeroplane the running of a great railway system, he would quite naturally regard the apparently universal mechanism as being inherent in the material system itself simply because, to his extremely limited powers of observation and understanding, no mind was visibly intervening at any stage of the process whatever; or he might attribute its activity to some god, in the sense of some super-savage type of personality; but he would be totally unable, I think, to connect such complex yet apparently completely *self-acting* mechanisms with any type of mind common with his own, simply because he himself could never form the necessary conceptions which lie at the origin of the entire construction. And thus the very complexity and autonomy of such mechanism, while actually in itself the best expression of a far

higher level of mind, would of themselves *conceal* the originative and controlling mind from all observers far below its own elevated stage. For nowhere could such a simple mind discern the visible presence of what it could recognize as human supervision, which is here operating not directly upon every detailed movement, but only indirectly, and at an enormous interval, through its application of abstruse mechanical theory to the purely automatic working of a material and *non*-human machine. Only a mind comparable to itself in knowledge and power of comprehension therefore could ever discover here the mind that originated and controls.

We may then sum up these conclusions by saying that in the universe as we experience it mind must express and manifest itself effectively always in some form of what is, in principle, automatic mechanism—either purely physical, or social; and this, further, to an ever increasing degree as mind itself continues to evolve. But on the other hand, this very expansion of its own instrumental mechanism, when carried far enough, must in the end inevitably conceal the originating mind from the discernment of all other minds that are as yet far removed from its own high degree of development. For plainly, the more extensively and the more completely automatic the machinery becomes, the more efficiently can it fulfil the aims and achieve the purposes of the directive mind, which is thus enabled to suspend all direct interference with detailed activities so long as it retains an effective general oversight or control. But this again means that such an unconscious mechanism, whilst remaining itself wholly material and so non-intelligent, can nevertheless take the place and perform the characteristic functions of self-conscious mind, as in every common case where

handwork is displaced by a machine.[1] Thus matter, although still thoroughly material in its constitution, can under the supervision of consciousness assume functions that characterize mind and mind alone; and can assume these, still further, so completely as to render the presence and direct operation of mind itself imperceptible to minds of a lower order. Briefly, then, we may say that the manifestation of mind within and upon the physical universe necessarily means complex automatic mechanism, and the higher the mind the more, and the more automatic, this mechanism; while, on the other hand, the more, and the more automatic, the mechanism, the more difficult must it become for a relatively low intelligence to discern the existence and activity of the directive mind.

[1] The equivalence of "automatic" and "self-acting" in itself exhibits our unconscious designation of a purely material structure as nevertheless a "self". Equally significant is the subconscious application of moral ideas in this connection, as when we say that a repaired machine or watch "ought" to work properly.

CHAPTER VIII

AUTOMATIC MECHANISM AND DESIGN

1. The foregoing argument on the relation between mind, as dominant, and automatic mechanism as the indispensable instrument of its effective action, will doubtless appear to be mainly, if not completely, identical with the classic and familiar argument from design. I admit at once that there is—and indeed there must be—some degree of resemblance and parallelism; but at the same time it certainly appears to myself that my discussion places the entire problem in a somewhat new light that is more in consonance with the distinctively modern point of view. For the term "design", in the first place, is obviously ambiguous. It may have one meaning that is in the main artistic, or another that is predominantly practical—active—dynamic. I do not mean that there is any absolute opposition between these two significations; it is rather simply another matter of aspect and emphasis. Still the "design" of a stained glass window *e.g.* or of an extensive flower garden, or statue or vase, is of a markedly different type from the design that is served by a working machine or—what is here again a highly significant analogy—by the routine and "mechanical" activities of some social group like an office staff or army battalion. In the first instance the design is predominantly embodied within the ordered material system itself just as this appears to the observer,

to such a degree indeed that we may say that its whole purpose is just thus to embody and patently express the design in question ; so far, that is, as this fails to become *immediately* or " intuitively " grasped by a competent spectator the main purpose of the work has been defeated. There always exists, of course, some ulterior end—artistic pleasure, symbolism, education or religious impressiveness. But if these are included within the meaning of " design " in such cases, this simply reveals more plainly the actual ambiguity of the term itself ; and when we turn to the second type—to machines and to ordered social systems—we see at once that their " design " is predominantly external to the arrangement taken in itself, and can never be completely embodied therein, although it must always manifest itself there to some extent. On the other hand, it often happens that the two aspects of " design "—the artistic and the practical—are united in the same system, as *e.g.* a magnificent organ or fine public building ; or again, the specifications and designs of intricate machinery ; in all such instances alike therefore it is the characteristic *dominance*—not the mere presence—of mind that is manifest in design. Allied with this is the passivity of all finished artistry, whose nature it is first of all to be enjoyed, even if it is afterwards actively responded to, as contrasted with the inherently dynamic character of all mechanism.

My own argument hitherto, however, has been based neither upon the artistic aspect of design, nor upon its more important meaning of purpose or end, but rather upon the specific concept of automatic mechanism ; or in other words, not upon the truth that all mechanism is intended to subserve some intent which is (first) dis-

tinguishable from the instrument itself and (secondly) psychical in its nature (whereas the mechanism is often physical), but on the fact that in order to attain any of its ends mind must employ some relevant type of autonomous mechanical structure and activity. I have emphasized throughout, in short, not the existence of purpose, but rather the universal *method*—the distinctive *modus operandi*—whereby alone the dominant mind can attain its purpose in the actual world. The distinction between my own standpoint and that which appeals to purpose and design as such is thus, I think, clear and definite; and if mechanism must still be interpreted in terms of design, then it implies design not in the artistic or static sense, but rather in the dynamic and active mode characteristic of the cooperating factors of every producing system, in which the immanent or embodied design is determined by, and is therefore subordinate to, some design that transcends—and in that sense is external to—the ordered system so far as this can ever be taken purely in itself; and this aspect of the whole situation is best expressed, in my opinion, by "mechanism".

2. But in another and still more important feature the principle of automatic mechanism is truer and more valuable than the conception of artistic or purposive design. For it is far more in agreement with the characteristic *evolutionary* standpoint of all present-day knowledge. In this vital respect artistic design, merely as such, fails us almost completely, simply because its predominant meaning is static or finished arrangement. It refers to such products of design—and such products only—as are complete, and are perfect just because

they are complete; in other words, the essential idea of actively cooperating factors is here almost altogether absent. Still more is there lacking any reference to the further development of these results of design; on the contrary their very completeness—their finished perfection—of itself excludes the developmental point of view. I do not mean that this can be excluded absolutely; that, in the light of present-day thought, is quite impossible. But nevertheless the evolutionary concept remains here quite subordinate; and when it is introduced at all, it is brought to bear upon the history of crafts and artists rather than upon any given results of their activity.

Mechanism, on the other hand, is evolutional of its very nature. Every one of its distinctive types is the expression of the successful dominance of some mind in some environing sphere or other; and it matters not in the least how narrow this sphere at first may be. For every mechanism alike represents the solution of one of the mind's many problems, thus enabling it to turn to others of greater difficulty which again it solves by the aid of mechanisms of still greater complexity. This process is not only plainly visible equally in the development of modern machinery, and in the evolution of social structure, but is indeed inevitable. For it obviously expresses the inherent capacity of mind incessantly to expand, and so transcend itself at any given stage; and so far as mechanism is concerned, this is always true of society even though there are occasional individual exceptions.

All this may be summed up by saying that although design in material structures may be admitted—here, of course, only for argument's sake—to imply the *presence*

of mind, nevertheless it expresses most inadequately (first) the dynamic *dominance* of mind, and (secondly) the inherent evolutional *self-transcendence* of the dominant mind. Both of these equally essential characteristics, on the other hand, appear to me to be sufficiently clearly expressed in the very nature of material mechanisms; and for this reason I venture to regard the principle of automatic mechanism as markedly distinct from all the earlier arguments from design.

But this difference between the two methods of treating the problem carries with it a further highly important consequence. For design, in what I take to be its predominant sense of artistic or static ordered arrangement, always conceals the originating mind far less effectively than does increasingly complex and self-acting mechanism. On the contrary, the more this type of design is extended and multiplied the more it appears to me patently to *reveal* the intelligence whence it arose. This is, I think, at once obvious in the instances already cited—in architecture and artificial landscapes, in plastic art and even in the draughtsman's plans of machinery; the more extensive and intricate these become, the more immediately and clearly is the hand of the artist discerned; and this, it must further be noted, even by minds of a much more primitive level than his own. The reason for this is simple. Except in the last case, all design of this character remains in close touch with natural objects and arrangements, and falls therefore within the scope of comprehension of every degree of intelligence; I do not mean, of course, exhaustively so, but still sufficiently so for the purpose of our argument here. The ultimate cause of these conditions of human experience, indeed, may lie in the very character of art itself, so far as it is

the purpose of Art to copy or to interpret Nature ; [1] so that no matter how fine or how many or how intricate its products may become it nevertheless always remains possible for even the simplest intellect—since this is already sufficiently acquainted with Nature—to perceive the creative mind of the designer.

3. But when we turn to self-acting mechanism the governing conditions of the situation are totally different. Certainly so long as we are concerned with merely simple mechanisms it still remains possible for a simple intelligence to discern its fellow mind without much difficulty. But as mind continuously extends its dynamic sway over matter—as its dominance comes to express far-ranging purposes that are almost absolutely removed from man's primitive needs [2]—as these social ends become more intricate and more closely interconnected and interdependent—and as, finally, man's own immediately directive personal activities in achieving these purposes are displaced to an ever increasing degree by highly complex autonomous mechanical contrivances each of which is frequently a detail in a vast whole, so that its immediate function is rarely clear to the uninstructed [3]—so much the more difficult must it become for any intellect that still remains at the original primitive level to discern in the structure and working of such detailed mechanisms

[1] I do not however suggest that this is the whole truth ; but further discussion of this point is here irrelevant.

[2] Here once more the supreme importance of the mechanical aspects of modern civilization, and still more of the future, must be remembered.

[3] Automatic telephone contrivances, signalling and motor devices and wireless inventions are patent instances of what I am here referring to ; these may obviously be multiplied indefinitely ; the point is the extensive range of their interconnection.

the operation of any mind in its own sense of that term, and with whose character it is itself familiar.[1] Between the highly developed consciousness of the inventor and controller of such mechanisms and the simple consciousness of such an observer there has gradually arisen an almost absolute chasm, comparable only to the contrast between a child and a Newton ; the purposes and methods of the one have become utterly incomprehensible to the other ; and yet the first has continuously evolved from the second, so that in their nature they still remain essentially akin. A survey of the most recent of modern inventions, resting as these do on the employment of the invisible and intangible mechanism of the ether, and still more the consideration of the inevitable future developments in this direction, appear to myself to show most clearly that the more such self-acting mechanisms develop the more—in this differing absolutely from "design" —must they effectually conceal the character and the activities of the originative mind, purely *as* mind, from every intelligence of a primitive order.

The underlying principle involved here has many fundamentally important aspects ; but the most essential point is that mind, which we have seen to be always characterized by a real and true freedom,[2] is able to embody its own spiritual activities within a sphere which is wholly physical—the sphere of matter.[3] At first sight this must seem inconceivable ; for such purely material necessity appears to be the absolute antithesis of true freedom. And yet we find that it is just this material

[1] Here we must again recall the *quasi*-scientific nature of the daily experience of every civilized person, however humble and ignorant he may be. It is easy to forget this ; *cf. ante*, p. 127.

[2] *Cf.* chap. vii. sect. 1.

[3] Including, for my present purpose, the ether.

necessity, owing to its unvarying persistence, definiteness and precision,[1] that provides the sole means whereby mind can achieve its freely determined purposes by indelibly impressing upon matter this organized structure; apart from this influence mind would be completely helpless within the physical universe. Thus matter, in the form of automatic mechanism, may be said actually to take the place of mind—to fulfil active functions that could first originate nowhere save in the rational intellect. So far, further, as these functions come to be performed more and more automatically, the more does mind transfer its own inherent power of control to its instrumental mechanism; and thus, in the end, the material mechanism, while embodying as it actually does the active purposes, and therefore the very nature, of mind, at the same time replaces mind, and in so doing conceals it both by its own physical constitution and by a pure necessity that seems at first sight wholly antithetic to spiritual freedom. And yet it is mind, although removed as it were from the actual scene of operations like a General directing modern warfare, that is the real source of the entire system, equally in its structure and its activity.

In every complex material mechanism therefore—and the more complex the more clearly—we find, not (as is so generally maintained) a physical necessity and an invariable causal sequence that are *antithetic* to mind, but rather matter that has been elevated by mind to its own superior level and endowed with its inherent capacity for self-direction, so that its very necessity has in this way been made to express the characteristic freedom of mind. And finally, we must observe that this elevation of matter

[1] These characteristics underlie the Principle of Causation.

to the rank of mind springs always from the mind; of itself matter can never attain this higher stage; so that while mind is powerless to manifest itself apart from relevant mechanism, matter on the other hand is equally helpless, without the organising activity of mind, to raise itself above its natural level.

4. But now the question at once arises—a question forced upon us by the development of modern science—What, precisely, is the "natural level" of matter? And just as science has raised the problem, so it has recently furnished the final answer. For matter manifests itself always under the form of extremely complex autonomous mechanism. The entire physical universe on the one hand, and every one of its most minute constituents on the other, are alike self-acting mechanisms of the highest intricacy. Every atom is a complex system of intense energy and incessant motion, whose laws are so involved that only in the simplest of the chemical elements have they as yet been ascertained with any accuracy. "Mathematical difficulties prohibit us from investigating the possible radiation from an atom containing more than one electron and a nucleus"; [1] although at the same time these difficulties will doubtless be surmounted by future mathematicians. But it must be observed that the essential point here is that they are not so much difficulties of observation and experiment, as of comprehending and expressing the ruling principles which govern these complicated interrelations between the dynamic factors; and Sir Ernest Rutherford has recently suggested that even the electron may not be the simplest physical unit, but be composed of others still more elementary

[1] *Science Progress*, vol. xvi, p. 233.

than itself. It is perfectly obvious therefore that thought is here dealing with a pure automatic mechanism, ruled throughout all its self-directed activities by physical laws which are, however, far too intricate to be readily solved even by the powerful analysis of modern mathematics; so that the human mind is really in precisely the same position as that of an intelligent savage painfully endeavouring to understand the scientific principles of a modern power station. And when we turn to the opposite extreme, we find that exactly the same holds true of stellar systems. "Professor Russell, investigating theoretically, found that certain numerical relations must hold . . . he also showed that the predictions of theory are confirmed quantitatively by observation . . . the conditions postulated by the mathematician are nearer to the truth than is often the case in his idealized problems"; [1] our suppositious "savage", therefore, is making excellent progress in his attempt to find accurate expressions of natural laws. Nor can we abandon mechanism even in our consideration of vital processes; and here again the general principles remain the same as in physical phenomena proper. "The machinery which regulates the behaviour of groups of cells within the body of the embryo is one of the utmost complexity", affirms Sir A. Keith; [2] although this must not be taken to imply that Life can be exhaustively expressed in terms of the categories of physics alone.[3]

[1] Dr. J. H. Jeans, *Nature*, vol. 113, pp. 336, 337.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. 112, p. 260. *Cf.* also Prof. Julian Huxley, vol. 113, p. 276.

[3] I may refer here to my treatment of determination and self-determination in *The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation; cf.* index references; also p. 70 *ante*, n. Similarly with regard to the nervous correlates of mental activity: "Physico-chemical processes of varying degrees of complexity form the most

So much then for the various systems, both atomic and astronomical, which make up the material universe. But the recent theory of relativity, still further, regards this entire universe as a single dynamic physical system, finite in its extent and unified throughout in its laws. Every electron, as we have already seen from Dr. Whitehead, radiates its influence throughout the whole of space ;[1] but " space ", for Einstein, is synonymous with the ether as the seat and the medium of physical energy. " According to the general theory of relativity space is endowed with physical qualities ; in this sense, therefore, there exists an ether. According to the general theory of relativity space without ether is unthinkable; for in such space there not only would be no propagation of light, but also no possibility of existence for standards of space and time, nor therefore any space-time intervals in the physical sense " ; [2] and the almost infinite intricacy of this system is patently expressed in the difficulty of Einstein's whole theory.

Any further detailed instances however, fascinating and suggestive though they are, are here unnecessary ; for sufficient has been said to establish the two fundamental points that are germane to our present problem—first the universality of dynamic and *autonomous* mechanism, and secondly the baffling *complexity* of its systematic organization throughout the entire physical realm of matter and ether ; and in both aspects alike this concept of mechanism is essentially distinct from the earlier idea

reasonable bases for our working hypotheses " as to the central nervous system (R. D. Gillespie, *British Journal of Psychology*, vol. xv. p. 273).

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 99.

[2] *Sidelights on Relativity*, p. 23. It is important to avoid confusing the scientific theory of relativity with any of the philosophic principles bearing the same name.

of mere " design ", particularly in the change of emphasis from " purpose " to " autonomy ".

5. But these results must now be associated with our previous conclusions that the inherent dominance of mind, when operating upon matter, must manifest itself always in the construction of material mechanisms; further, that the more developed the mind, the more complex and at the same time more automatic must these instrumental mechanisms become; but finally, and at first sight paradoxically, the higher the level of the dominant mind, the more must it tend to become veiled and concealed by its own mechanical constructions from both the observation and the comprehension of every mind that is much lower than itself in the sale of psychic evolution, simply because the completely automatic working and profound intricacy of the material mechanism enable it to carry out all the ideas and fulfil every function of its originating mind in a manner that is throughout purely mechanical and unconscious, and which must therefore appear, to the relatively primitive intelligence of our supposed investigator, as completely lifeless and mindless—as the sphere of invariable causal sequence and physical necessity, and wholly free therefore from the direct control of any intelligence. " Mind " (to repeat) " necessarily means automatic mechanism, and the higher the mind, the more, and the more automatic, the mechanism; while, on the other hand, the more, and the more automatic, the mechanism, the more difficult must it become for a relatively low intelligence to discern mind." [1]

But before proceeding farther, I wish to exclude the

[1] *Ante*, p. 130.

well-known philosophic argument that matter, after all, is somehow nothing but a form of mind, whether this suggestion assumes the Berkleyan, the Pantheistic, or the Subjectivist—not to say the Solipsistic—type. Any detailed discussion of these questions would obviously constitute too violent a digression from my present problem. It must be sufficient to say that my own standpoint is thoroughly realistic, in the current metaphysical sense of this term; matter then remains matter, and so is non-psychical; just as mind remains mind, and is therefore non-physical; although at the same time mind both knows and dominates physical reality.[1]

I emphasize this philosophic standpoint in order to debar any attempt at the solution of the problem of the relation between matter and mind by transforming, in any way whatever, the nature of the first into the nature of the second—either by regarding matter as phenomenal or as conceptual, or by looking upon mind as a function, or some refined form, of matter. Every suggestion of this kind I take to be only an evasion of the ultimate issue.

With this important proviso then, it seems to me to be possible still further to develop the position hitherto attained by arguing that if the dominance of mind over matter necessarily and logically means automatic mechanism, then, conversely, such physical mechanism must always logically imply a dominant mind; and again, the more complex and more automatic the mechanism, the higher must be the rational level of the originative mind. In practical life, it must here be observed, we

[1] *Cf.* further, in general terms, *The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation*, chaps. xviii and xix; and in more detail, *A Theory of Direct Realism.*

always adopt this attitude without the slightest hesitation or difficulty; but, it is essential to note, we do so only with reference to a mind that is, in principle, comparable to our own in its general range and capacity. But whenever, on the other hand, we discern a mechanism that appears to transcend that range and capacity, while at the same time its results are analogous to those of our own modern methods, then the question at once and quite naturally arises as to the actual presence of some controlling mind. Are the canals of Mars, for instance, purely natural phenomena or artificial irrigating mechanisms constructed by that planet's inhabitants? and if the earth were invaded by an army resembling Mr. Wells's Martians, should we regard these as themselves intelligent, or as material entities, the wholly mechanical instruments of some intellect far higher than our own? or if, again, systematic light or electric signals were to reach the earth out of space—as is, I suppose, quite possible—once more the question would inevitably arise as to whether these purely physical phenomena implied the activity of mind or not.

My immediate point just here however is not the answer which might be given to these questions—I intend to deal with that very shortly; but at this stage I wish to emphasize the naturalness and the apparent necessity of the connection which we thus unquestionably accept between complex physical mechanisms and the presence, not simply of mind as passive and observant, but of mind as in some way or other actively dominating such mechanisms; and this, still further, despite the patent disparity, which (as I have already observed) amounts almost to an absolute dualism, between matter and mind.

The same principle, of course, holds true with regard to what may quite properly be termed " social mechanisms " such as an army, or a business or government staff ; but their increasing complexity and indispensable routine—at once automatic and " mechanical "—only illustrate the relation that is similarly taken to hold between mind and *physical* mechanisms. It is these latter which, existing as they obviously do throughout the natural world, constitute the subject-matter of our present discussion ; and this brings us to the consideration of the position that must be adopted first with reference to such phenomena as the Martian canals or interplanetary signals, but secondly—and this is of course the actually crucial issue—to the question of the possible connection between the universal material mechanisms, *as* material, and some form of mind.

CHAPTER IX

MECHANISM AND THE SUPREME SELF

1. The expression of the relation between the physical universe—here regarded as essentially a universe of physical mechanisms—and mind may be said, I believe, to assume four principal forms. There is first the theory that consciousness is merely the epiphenomenal by-product of nervous processes—a theory which, in view of my own principle of the inherent dominance of mind at its highest levels, may here be dismissed without further discussion. Secondly, we find the familiar argument from design throughout Nature; this, however, has already been found to be inferior in its force and value to the principle of mechanism. The third form may best be termed the faith, resting on some religious basis either natural or revelatory, that there exists a divine creator and controller of the material universe; and finally, there are agnosticism and philosophic naturalism—the former with its denial of any grounds for positive knowledge, and the latter maintaining that the mechanism of Nature is throughout self-explanatory without suggesting, much less logically necessitating, any ultimate reference to mind.

It is the last of these positions that I wish now to consider, although it is obviously impossible to dissociate their implications from many forms of religious belief; and the point which seems to me of greatest importance is the conclusion just arrived at that every mechanism

that is characterized by extreme complexity and automatism, combined with a far-reaching range and unity, must inevitably *conceal* the originative mind from every intelligence that is far below its own capacity, and must therefore appear to such an intelligence as wholly "mindless", although its real nature may be quite the reverse. For—to sum up my previous arguments—its very automatism of itself duplicates the essentially free activity of mind, since it attains definite ends and fulfils definite functions which are in their nature identical with functions and ends conceived in thought but impossible of execution *except* by means of autonomous mechanism. In other words, the action and results of many types of automatic mechanism are patently the action and results, not of the mechanism alone and purely as such, but of mechanism as constructed and controlled by mind for its own distinctive ends. It is therefore logical to conclude that every type of automatic mechanism may similarly be constructed and controlled by some relevant type of mind, particularly when we recognize further that there appears to be no limit to the evolution of mechanisms that are undeniably the instruments of intelligence.

On the other hand it is obviously the case that, in all such mechanical instruments as these last, the influence of the dominant mind must at some stage or other become immediately discerned—the actual transition must be made from physical mechanism to intelligence, so that both then become discerned in their proper relation as, while disparate in nature, yet equally real. But this truth is too limited; it ignores other vital aspects of the situation. For this final step from material mechanism to mind always becomes more and more deferred to a later stage in the investigation, first by every increase in

the *complexity* of physical organization, and secondly by every expansion of the *extent* of this organization. It is only necessary here to compare any simple modern machine with any vast and complex mechanical system to perceive the obviousness of this fundamentally important fact ; which again implies that the final discovery—the successful running to earth, as it were—of the controlling mind must depend on the native capacity of the investigating intellect, not, however, in the sense that such an intellect is ignorant or inefficient, but rather that it will inevitably regard the material mechanism as being purely self-directive and self-maintaining quite independently of any mind ; for this mind, although actually operative, will nevertheless remain under the given conditions completely indiscernible.

We moderns, born as we are into a scientific and mechanical atmosphere, too easily forget this truth, thus unconsciously crediting every type of mind with our own familiarity with the universal connection between civilized intelligence and its instrumental machinery. But, as I have already observed, the attitude of the savage mind, and still more of the animal mind, must be wholly different from our own, which is itself indeed only the outcome of a long and slow development, as may be seen by recalling the obscurantist outlook of earlier ages with their ready belief in magic and witchcraft ; to such relatively low types of mind therefore all complex autonomous mechanism must appear to be finally *self*-explanatory and *self*-maintaining, not because it really is so however, but simply because the task of tracing the actually dominant mind is far beyond their ability.

2. It is a simple matter to apply this conclusion to the

material universe. For we there find every one of the features that have just been considered manifested on the widest possible scale—vast range, equally in space and in time—a complexity that is almost literally not only beyond human comprehension but beyond all human conception [1]—and finally an automatism that is everywhere complete and flawless to such a degree that natural—here in the sense of physical and mechanical—laws, principles, agencies and causes are amply sufficient to explain every process whether vital or infra-vital, except insofar as the infinite regression of causation is concerned.

These facts themselves I take to be unquestionable; and I have already repudiated any subjectivist or pan-psychist interpretation which seeks to transform the physical phenomena into mind itself or into some aspects of mind; in the same way I should exclude all vitalistic concepts of a super-physical agency in the realm of life comparable to Driesch's entelechy.[2] But the fundamental implication of these facts appears to me to have been completely ignored in modern speculation; that is the truth that these indelible characters of the material world—the very range and complexity of its perfectly automatic mechanism—are precisely such as must inevitably defer, in the course of its investigation, any transition from such a physical mechanism to a dominating

[1] This however implies no agnostic attitude except in the ultimate sense that the universe must always remain finally inexplicable; in every other respect my arguments for the unceasing evolution of intelligence still apply.

[2] At the same time I recognize the validity of truly biological categories and modes of approach and explanation. The whole issue appears to me to turn on the varying degrees of complexity of physical organization. *Cf. The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation*, chap. xi: "The Logical Consequences of Advancing Complexity".

mind—must remove the discovery of such a mind as actually existing—to the farthest possible point and moment. In other words, the unity, intricacy and automatism of the mechanism of the material world are so perfect, and its extent is so vast, both spatially and temporally, that the immediate action of a dominant mind is nowhere necessary, and its immediate presence therefore can nowhere be discernible. If then such a dominant mind at all exists, it need be only—so far as my argument has gone hitherto—of the type of the absolutely transcendent God of Aristotle or of Deism—the "absentee God" of *Sartor Resartus*.

But this conclusion is totally different from the usual application of the argument from design, which insists that the more design is manifested in the material world the more clearly is the dominant mind revealed. The principle of automatic mechanism, on the contrary, implies that the very perfection and range of such mechanism must effectively *conceal* such a mind;[1] while, to avoid confusion, I may add that my argument rests, not as in Deism upon the attributes of the divine mind as such, but upon our actual experience of the typical relations between mind and physical mechanism.

Nor, again, because an extremely complex and automatic mechanism thus takes the place of, and therefore inevitably conceals, a dominant mind, does it follow that the real existence of such a mind is impossible or inconceivable. On the contrary, we have found personality itself to be the final outcome of a long evolution whose basis, if not indeed its entire ground and explanation, lies in the material world, just as it is also intimately associated with the material brain. Selfhood

[1] Except, conceivably, in some form of miracle.

therefore, far from being a foreign element within the universe, is plainly one of its highest products; it is, further, capable of an illimitable expansion; and this again is equivalent to its increasing dominance over its own physical environment. It effects this control, finally, by means of its influence—inexplicable though this is—over the cerebral mechanisms—mechanisms whose actual complexity of structure is as yet very far from being understood, but which may be faintly appreciated when it is realized that the cerebral cortex alone contains 9,000 million living cells, each of which, still further, forms a laboratory infinitely more elaborate than that of any chemist or physicist.

So far as my argument has been carried hitherto therefore, it is (to say the least) possible that the physical universe, thus regarded as a supremely complex and automatic mechanism, is related to a dominant mind of a correlatively high order which is, however, absolutely concealed by that very mechanism itself. Materialism and naturalism, on the contrary, appear to me to have overlooked this alternative; they have restricted themselves to the principle that the only logical implication of the perfect mechanism of the natural world is the total *absence* of any directive mind; such a conclusion, in my opinion, is radically fallacious simply because it omits from consideration an equally logical alternative inference from the given premises.

3. Can we now advance our argument further, so as to obtain something more definite than this possibility? If we continue our analysis of the essential nature of mechanism, it seems to me that we can.

For we must not wholly ignore, in this connection, the

implication of the infinite regressiveness characterizing all causal explanation—the fact that the chain of causation is unending when traced either backwards or forwards. If we regard the physical universe as what it obviously is—everywhere heterogeneous and incessantly changing—then none of its earlier stages can constitute an absolutely original cause, unless this stage is held to be both static and homogeneous; and the same holds true of any of its future conditions as an absolutely final effect. Even if we go beyond the concept of cause altogether to the profounder idea of the entire system as the ground of all its manifold changes, as we are in the end compelled to do,[1] still the successive phases of the system, extending backwards into beginningless time, only raise afresh the same difficulty. The problem of course attends equally every artificial human mechanism; but here we do obtain what, though certainly never an absolutely final explanation, is at the same time a kind of resting-place for investigation, in the intervention of a dominant self, even though this halting-place can never be other than temporary. But it is, I think, quite illogical to exclude in advance the application of this analogy to the universe of natural mechanisms; and then this entails the suggestion that a dominant mind of adequate capacity constitutes an original cause, or a truly sufficient ground, for the being of the physical universe to a much higher degree than that universe does for itself. For selfhood, despite the incessant transience of its psychic factors, still possesses a permanent wholeness or entirety, within which past, present and future are held together

[1] *Cf.* for a fuller treatment of this point *The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation*, chap. viii, and *The Monist*, vol. xxxi. p. 367; "The General Conditions which Determine Development".

in a unity which can never be the attribute of any purely physical system; and the higher the status of such a self the truer does this principle become, so that a mind which is capable of dominating the whole material universe must, in that sense at least, constitute its causal origin and finally sufficient ground. Even though such a personality at once demands its own further explanation, still we have undoubtedly advanced a definite stage towards a solution of our problems. This conclusion however is true only in the light of all the considerations that I have hitherto advanced; and any attempt to base it solely on the *a priori* attributes of the divine mind is altogether insufficient. The course of the argument must proceed in precisely the reverse direction, and thus find its only proper basis in the facts of concrete experience together with their logical implications.

Nonetheless the two suggestions just dealt with—(*a*) the intimate connection, equally from the standpoint of its primary origin and its ultimate dominance, between mind and the physical universe, and (*b*) the analogy drawn from human selfhood regarded as a ground of explanation to a higher type of personality—remain suggestions and nothing more. They may however be still further supported by continuing the analysis of the nature of mechanism as such.

4. Every artificial mechanism, then, is in principle self-destructive. The interaction between its parts inevitably tends first to detract from their efficient working, and secondly, apart from constant renewals and repairs, to destroy them; and as machinery grows ever more and more delicate in construction and adjustment—another obvious tendency—as it increases in extent and

rapidity of action, the more must this ineradicable disadvantage be guarded against. An ideal mechanism therefore would be self-maintaining if not indeed self-repairing, and the first of these features is clearly being increasingly attained in modern construction. But in the actual physical universe it can never be completely achieved, since if it were it would form one fundamental step towards a perpetual motion that is really impossible. This ideal then remains an ideal; which means that while it can be conceived by human intelligence, it can never be fully realized in the material world, although it can always be more and more nearly approximated to. But this again at once implies that a mind of adequate intellective capacity and active dominance would actually achieve this ideal; for the problem is throughout a matter of continuity and of degree of development.

Now when we investigate the ultimate mechanisms of the physical world we find that this ideal construction has there been actually and universally achieved. For every atom is a complex mechanism of the most extreme delicacy in its structure and the highest intensity in its action [1]—two features which we have seen to form the most serious obstacles to the attainment of mechanical self-maintenance; yet every atom, apart from radioactive disintegration and from disruption by α-particles, both of which are exceptional phenomena,[2] undoubtedly appears to be eternally immune from self-destruction. And this capacity, further, appears to me to arise from the very nature of atomic structure; it is, that is to say, an inherent capacity, not one that is derived *ab extra*.

[1] Radioactive disintegration "is attended by the liberation of energy a million times greater than in any previously known change of matter" (Professor Soddy, *Nature*, vol. 104, p. 232).

[2] The first process, again, ultimately produces stable atoms.

For it seems to depend on the relatively enormous distances between the electrons themselves as compared with their own dimensions; the space within the confines of the whole atom, in other words, is almost completely empty except insofar as it is occupied—in accordance with Einstein's theory—by energy;[1] while the interacting forces that control the mutual approach and recoil of particles and electrons seem always to prevent actual contact even when collision occurs. The inevitable result of this arrangement would appear to be that all the electrons influence each other from a distance, and are thus kept eternally unchangeable in themselves so as to form an intensely dynamic mechanism which nevertheless is likewise eternal. I fully recognize, in view of our ignorance concerning the dynamical principles of interatomic processes, that such concepts as "contact" and "action at a distance" raise in an intensified form their old familiar difficulties.[2] But in whatever terms these phenomena may ultimately be expressed, the final result—that is the eternity of the mechanism—would seem to remain unaffected; and this indestructibility we have already seen to be the ideal that progressively arises in the human mind as its dominance over its material instruments advances, although its complete attainment is from the very nature of things impossible. Once again therefore the actual realization of this concept which we find to exist in the ultimate basis of the physical universe irresistibly suggests the reality of a mind of adequate intellectual capacity.

[1] *Cf. ante*, p. 141. Sir Oliver Lodge's comparison between the electrons in an atom and mice in a cathedral is sufficiently familiar.

[2] But Einstein's conception of space as being identical with energy removes these difficulties at least to some degree.

5. But the final essential characteristic of mechanism which I shall now consider appears to be still more indicative of such a mind. For we have already seen that a definite *fixity of structure*, which is correlative with the definite performance of a given function, is absolutely essential to every highly efficient mechanism. In other words, once any definite construction has been determined upon and successfully completed, that construction must be *retained unaltered* if its purpose is to be continuously effected. Renewal and repair simply reduplicate this construction throughout, while every improvement is but the substitution for one given type of another that is equally fixed and definite. We only state the converse of this by saying that the very nature of mechanism makes it absolutely impossible for it ever to alter its own structural arrangement, except of course destructively through the interaction of its parts.

But in the social world there actually occurs an incessant *evolution* of mechanical structure—an evolution, once again, which has in principle no conceivable limits, especially when the possibilities of the utilization of the ether are considered, not to include further the incalculable resources of intra-atomic energy. To what then is this incessant mechanical development, which is wholly impossible so far as mechanism in itself is concerned, ultimately due? Plainly, to that inherent characteristic of all mind which differentiates it almost absolutely from material mechanism—to its infinite plasticity—to the ease with which its entire ideational contents can become incessantly reshaped in the search for the most efficient means towards any given end.[1]

It is here, and here alone, that we can discover the real

[1] Cf. p. 35 *ante*.

cause of the unceasing *evolution* of mechanism. The human mind, both individually and socially, is uninterruptedly generating new ideas which promise the better attainment of its fundamental purposes. In this search it can never be finally satisfied. For the successful application of every new idea at once reveals further developments which facilitate its still wider application, while at the same time even failure may disclose some suggestion towards its own retrieval; and here the essential point is that this process is wholly natural, in the sense that it is the normal and inevitable mode of activity of mind as such. The fundamental characteristic of mind is thus an inherent and inexhaustible *plasticity* of organization; of mechanism, on the other hand, an inherent and indispensable *fixity* of organization necessary for its efficiency—this contrast between the two characters is absolute; and yet, despite this absolute contrast, the fixity of mechanism can always be surmounted by the dominant mind through its manipulation of mechanism in accordance with its own evolving concepts. The actual *evolution* of mechanism, in short, does not merely suggest, but *necessarily implies*, as its ultimate cause, the evolution of ideas in an adequately dominant mind.

But we find that the physical universe is not only, throughout its whole nature and extent, a pure mechanism, characterized therefore by an unalterable fixity of structure; it is, further, an eternally *evolving* mechanism which contains within itself, so far as scientific investigation can discern, all the governing conditions of its own evolving process. Such an evolution, however, we have just found to be not only impossible, but inconceivable apart from the prior, and equally real and natural, evolution of ideas in a mind of adequate dominance, which is

capable therefore of effecting the progressive material actualization—that is the evolution within the sphere of mechanism itself—of these immaterial ideas. The material universe then, being in itself a mechanism which, as mechanism, *cannot* evolve, while at the same time it actually *does* evolve—and evolves, further, on the vastest of scales which seem to possess no final limitation—*necessarily* implies the real existence of a mind which so dominates the whole realm of matter as progressively to embody therein, by means of perfectly definite, unalterable, and indestructible mechanisms, its own constructive—if not indeed creative—ideas. Such a mind therefore is a supreme self—the personal factor of the psychophysical universe within which it is omnipotent.

6. But as we have already seen, the complexity and perfect automatism of this material realm are necessarily of that extremely high degree such as must inevitably conceal the dominant self, as such ; the physical universe, as purely physical, must therefore be throughout impersonal. From the very conditions of the situation therefore, no direct and immediate knowledge whatever of this self can be obtained from any investigation of the physical world, unless we accept the reality of some kind of miraculous phenomena ; but these must here be excluded from our consideration.[1]

If however it is contended that none of the foregoing arguments is sufficient to establish conclusively the real existence of such a supreme self, but that they still remain no more than instructive suggestions, it must be pointed out in reply that the force of arguments of this character

[1] I do not intend categorically to deny the occurrence of miracles.

is always cumulative, and gains therefore in a geometrically progressive ratio as each separate contention finds support in all the others. There is of course nothing novel in this; it is simply the method that is practically adopted wherever logical demonstration is precluded. And if this conclusion is repudiated, what alternative remains? An attitude of absolute agnosticism seems to me impossible in the face of the large body of systematic facts that are presented by modern science, with every prospect of being still more firmly established as investigation proceeds.

Some kind of positive opinion, I venture to think, must be offered; and if the reality of a dominant self is denied, then the only alternative is the insistence on the absolutely mechanical nature of the universe, apart from the demonstrated existence of personality within human experience and—possibly—by spiritualistic phenomena.[1] But such an absolute mechanism at once precludes the possibility of evolution; all it permits is the activity of mechanisms which, simply because they are mechanisms, must be of an unalterable type, except insofar as their mutual action is destructive.

On the other hand, the fact of physical evolution is one of the most patent facts within all experience, including (in my opinion) all vital processes both in themselves and as the nervous basis of consciousness. In order to account for this evolution then, since it cannot be in any degree explained by the purely mechanical aspects of matter, the physical universe must be regarded as at one and the same time both physical and (somehow) super-physical. It must, in other words, be credited with

[1] It will be remembered that I prefer to make no appeal whatever to these.

some kind of nature or capacity that produces precisely the same result as does the dominance of the human mind over its own mechanisms—that is the limitless evolution of these mechanisms—although it is at the same time denied that this inherent nature or capacity is in any way analogous with human selfhood ; and this, further, in face of the fact that human personality is itself the wholly natural outcome of universal evolution. The self-contradictions of any such alternative as this appear to me quite insuperable.

CHAPTER X

THE SUPREME SELF AND THE ABSOLUTE

1. The conclusions of the preceding chapter may now be considered in their bearing upon transcendence and immanence. We found in the first place that the complex automatism of the physical universe—regarded of course in its true character *as* a mechanism—is so perfect that it is altogether impossible for purely scientific investigation to discern therein the immediate influence of any dominant mind. It may still be possible for this universe so to affect our æsthetic or religious sensitivity as to produce the conviction that such a mind actually exists; but this aspect of the situation is here excluded because it turns upon an issue not purely intellective; and with this proviso it follows that the "transition from mechanism to a dominating mind must be deferred to the farthest possible point and moment".[1] If then such a mind really exists, it need be only transcendent. Of course it might conceivably still continuously influence the mechanism of the material world; but as this influence is here *ex hypothesi* totally indiscernible,[2] it must remain, so far as the human intellect is concerned, wholly transcendent.

Still further, we saw that the essential character of all mechanism is "an inherent and indispensable fixity

[1] Pp. 146, 150 *ante*.

[2] Unless the self-maintenance of the mechanism is accepted as its manifestation—a suggestion already dealt with.

of organization ",[1] without which it could act only inadequately as the instrument of the dominant self. This fixity of mechanical construction, again, absolutely precludes all possibility of its own spontaneous evolution; nevertheless the physical universe actually exhibits an uninterrupted evolution which appears, so far as its highest products are concerned, to have no conceivable limits.[2] This final conclusion implies therefore the real existence of a dominant mind whose essential characteristic is the antithesis of fixity—that is " an inherent and inexhaustible plasticity ".

In the light of this summary of my previous position I shall now consider the questions of immanence and transcendence. The dominance of the supreme self is in the first place obviously an actual and real dominance, not merely abstract and nominal; it is the control of an autocrat, not of a monarch who reigns but does not govern; for it expresses itself in the inexhaustible evolutional capacity of the physical world; and this universal manifestation constitutes immanence—again real and actual.[3]

On the other hand, the evolution of the material world is throughout the direct result of its mechanical constitution; but only as this constitution operates in its complete entirety. I mean by this that it is only when we construct some theory of its nature which is on the same scale as Einstein's recent physical theories—a theory that is all-comprehensive in its form and applica-

[1] P. 157 *ante*.

[2] That is in life and conscious experience, resting as these do upon an organic and nervous basis which is always material and mechanical in principle.

[3] It will be recalled that immanence within æsthetic and religious experience is here excluded from consideration.

tion, and capable further of more and more correct and detailed formulation—that we can adequately account for its evolution purely in terms of itself ; an ideal achievement, of course, but nonetheless logically conceivable.[1] But whenever we restrict the investigation of evolutionary processes to any section that is less than the whole, as *e.g.* to life or to consciousness, then we are inevitably compelled in the end either to leave much unexplained, or to carry our analysis onwards until it in some aspect or another includes the whole. But this conclusion at once implies that the immanent influence of the supreme self has taken such a form as to confer upon the physical universe its inherent capacity for limitless self-evolution, independently of any direct and continuous direction from outside itself. Regarded from this standpoint, then, the supreme self is transcendent.

Obviously, however, it is neither exclusively transcendent nor exclusively immanent, but rather both in unison ; and which of these terms is selected as most adequate and true then depends entirely on the point of view adopted. The material universe (to restate this issue in different terms) possesses two equally inherent characteristics ; one of these necessarily implies the immanence of the supreme self, and the other its transcendence. The first is that continuous process of evolution which is absolutely precluded by mechanism taken purely in itself, and which therefore necessitates the dominance of mind ; hence its immanence. The second characteristic is the perfection of the automatic physical mechanism. For this enables it to maintain the evolutionary process of itself ; and hence the transcendence of the supreme

[1] It appears to me to be increasingly exhibited in modern astronomical theories of stellar constitution and distribution.

mind; and this, still further, is exhibited in that plasticity of all selfhood which is in absolute contrast with the fixity of mechanism, even while at the same time the advancing types of this fixity themselves express the originative intelligent plasticity.[1]

2. It is, then, logically necessary to distinguish the supreme self, as such, from the whole of reality, or from the Absolute; although to mistake their distinction for separation is a fundamental error. On the contrary there exists an indestructible unity between this self and the Whole, so that the Whole is inherently continuous; only it is a continuity everywhere characterized by a complete definiteness of differentiated organization and type. This, of course, is no new feature; for such continuity, inseparably combined with definiteness, is patent in every part of real existence—in the structure of atom and crystal as in the organization of life and consciousness. When therefore we expand this familiar modern conception so as to apply it to the Whole we discern the supreme self as one definite real and the physical universe as another. The nature of each, taken as itself, is definite, and in absolute contrast with the nature of the other; and yet, when taken as within the Whole, each is continuous with the other.[2]

[1] This advance is plainly manifest in the development of all modern machinery, where the basal principle involved is precisely the same as in the evolution of the material universe. One familiar instance is the addition of the striking parts to clocks and watches, while others are found in the continual improvements in wireless installations; in both cases we have the evolution of a small-scale mechanical "universe".

[2] If further actual analogies are helpful they may be found in the relations between solids, liquids and gases, or between the non-living and the vital, or between brain and conscious experience.

It appears to me that this view, when taken in its entirety, provides some kind of reconciliation of the current conflicting ideas relating to the reality and personality of God; only, in order to avoid the unconscious introduction of theological implications which may easily become confusing, although in themselves perfectly legitimate, I shall myself employ the term "supreme self"—"supreme" indicating absolute dominance, and "self" some type of personality which may quite literally be regarded as infinitely above human personality even while there exists between the two an unbroken continuity—just as, in another direction and on a far smaller scale, there is continuity between a Newton or a Shakespeare and an amœba. Thus we obtain first Mr. Bradley's position that "nothing is real except the Universe as a whole; for I cannot take God as including, or as equivalent to, the entire Universe".[1] Here the *distinction* between the supreme self and the Whole is insisted upon. There is something in the Universe that is other than and additional to the supreme self as such; and this, I think, is plainly true. We cannot conceive of any complete merging of the whole of reality within the supreme self—any exhaustive identification of all existents with "God", as in some extreme forms of pantheism; any more, *e.g.* than we can identify a great painter absolutely and exhaustively with his pictures; for they constitute one form of being, and he himself quite another—and a higher—form. Quantitatively or cumulatively therefore the supreme self does not "include" and is not "equivalent to" the Whole, which from this particular point of view may be said to transcend this self. In the same way an auto-

[1] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 448.

crat does not " include " his nation ; again—cumulatively—he is transcended by the nation, which " includes " his subjects together with himself. But mere " inclusion " and " equivalence " are obviously categories wholly inadequate in their reference to a situation of this kind. They are legitimate only when discussing strictly quantitative questions such as whether the dome of St. Paul's is " equivalent " to the entire cathedral, or the Bank of England to the national financial organization.

Our own problem however concerns not merely the relation of selfhood to the universe, but rather the status of a *supreme* self, to which every other existent without exception is subordinate, as, once again, in the case of an autocrat and his subjects. In a certain sense therefore—in action and influence, in diplomacy and war—the autocrat may quite truly be said to " include " or be " equivalent to " the nation ; though not in its historic continuity and incessant advance. But in every conceivable respect the supreme self, as supreme, is " equivalent to " the universe. For it is immanent therein, and from it have originated the nature and function of every subordinate existent ; and therefore, as Mr. Bradley goes on to say, " to compare God's reality with ours would be ridiculous ". This conclusion however must be generalized ; and then, since human personality itself is one outcome of the entire process of material evolution, its own status is higher than is that of the material world which is its basis ; so that " to compare God's reality with " that of this world must plainly be more ridiculous still ; and, to some degree or other, this holds of every existent alike. If the whole could possibly be conceived to contain an additional supreme self, then it would be more real than either of these. But this,

ex hypothesi, is impossible ; just as, and again *ex hypothesi*, it is impossible to separate the supreme self from the Whole.[1] The latter then, comprising as it obviously does the supreme self, is the complete and ultimate Real ; but *within* this Whole the supreme self is the ultimate Real ; so that the meaning of " Real " depends altogether on our selected point of view.

3. Mr. Bradley's further treatment of this question, however, raises another problem of equally fundamental importance—that is the legitimacy of regarding the ultimate Real as a supreme *self* ; his own conclusion being that to " take personality as being the last word about the Universe " is a " serious error ".[2] Again the issue depends on the standpoint adopted—as Mr. Bradley himself has insisted. The Universe, as the actually existing Whole, cannot itself be a self, unless we define " self ", as William James suggested, as including the entire environment which it influences and controls. But apart from any such extreme position the physical world, in virtue first of the definite fixity of its mechanical organization, and secondly of its non-psychical nature, cannot be a self. On the other hand, if we base our argument upon the principles that are involved in the character of human personality, both as such and in its incessant relation—as dominant—to its environment,

[1] Impossible, that is, except as the barest of conceptions, analogous to the imaginary quantities of mathematics. Our speculations, however, are useless except as they refer to the actual universe, wherein exist the supreme self and all subordinate reals. But still further, the very concept of a self implies some kind of content or objectivity distinguishable from itself, although such distinction, again, is not separation.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 451.

then it appears to me to be an inevitable conclusion that the relation between the Supreme Real and the remainder of the universe must conform to the same type, although on an inconceivably transcendent scale; the Supreme Real, therefore, must be a Supreme Self; and if the "last word about the Universe" is ever said, it will be the complete revelation of the nature of this Self. But obviously such a revelation cannot be fully comprehended by the human mind at its present level; as in Spinoza's philosophy, such a mind cannot conceive *all* the attributes of this self. Nevertheless, it can best and most truly apprehend them when they are expressed in terms of the principles implied by human personality at its own highest conceivable level.[1] It may be objected that this is sheer anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism, however, need not inevitably be "sheer"; everything depends on the character ascribed to "anthropos". Take this in its highest conceivable forms, and it then becomes quite true that in a certain sense the universe is, and indeed must be, anthropomorphic; since to deny this absolutely is simply to deny the essential continuity of the whole process of evolution and so make evolution altogether meaningless. If, in short, the "flower in the crannied wall" reveals "what God and man is", still more must the nature of man himself do so. Only, since the universe is infinitely inexhaustible, its revelation must be inexhaustible too.[2]

4. So far again as Time enters into consideration here, the supreme Real must always have possessed the

[1] I desire to avoid here the discussion of any given theological system; but the Christian doctrine of the incarnation is a patent instance of this position.

[2] *Cf. The Development of Religion*, chap. i.

essential attributes of selfhood; for otherwise these attributes must have originated from some subordinate form of reality—a form inherently incapable therefore of producing supremacy. This seems to me to preclude the acceptance of Professor Alexander's account of the relation of Deity to Space-Time. For if the latter is inherently capable of evolving Deity, and if it is also originally non-psychical, then its evolution must be regarded as determined from the outset by a supreme Real that is, in principle, a self. On the other hand, if every condition governing universal evolution is actually inherent in Space-Time, then this itself must always be a supreme self, whatever other characters it may also possess.

A more complete analysis of the entire problem, however, would prove that our ordinary concepts of time, of durational existence, and of development, must all be expanded so as to be transformed, perhaps beyond all recognition; and this would be almost equivalent to excluding them altogether. But this subject is of too abstract and technical a character to be considered here in any adequate detail.[1]

But if, with this proviso before us, we define the Absolute as the whole of reality, or the totality of real being, then existentially — ontologically — quantitatively — the supreme self cannot be identical with the Absolute; on the other hand if "Absolute" is interpreted to mean universally dominant and ultimately controlling, then the supreme self is also the Absolute. The latter however is the general popular meaning of this term, and the former its correct philosophical meaning. I find it

[1] I should like to refer to Dr. Bosanquet's treatment in *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, chaps. ix, x.

difficult, therefore, to understand Professor Webb's uncompromising identification of God with the Absolute, as "the infinite and all-inclusive Reality. . . . I am convinced", he says, "that Religion cannot, when once it has reached the stage at which the question has become intelligible, give any but an affirmative answer to the question whether God is the Absolute. . . . The statement that God is not the Absolute must, if seriously taken, make nonsense of Religion. . . . I should insist that the object of religious devotion cannot, when once the question is raised, be held to be less than the Ultimate Reality".[1]

There is here, I think, some risk of being involved in a position indistinguishable, except in its verbal expression, from pantheism. For thus to identify God with "the all-inclusive Reality" is surely to identify Him with the totality of everything that exists; otherwise "all-inclusive" becomes an empty metaphor. This "all-inclusive Reality", further, must be the sole "object of religious devotion"; worship must therefore be accorded to the material universe in some degree, even if not to the same degree as to the supreme spiritual being. So far as this attitude is regarded as unjustifiable, so far must God be distinguished from the whole of Reality; and this, in fact, is Professor Webb's own fundamental principle; for "to nothing less than Personal Spirit can Personal Spirit without loss of self-respect render homage".[2]

But the Absolute, in the philosophic sense of the totality of existence, and so comprising matter within itself, comprises something other that "Personal Spirit";

[1] *God and Personality*, pp. 134, 154, 153, 143.
[2] *Divine Personality and Human Life*, p. 81.

worship therefore, from Professor Webb's standpoint, can be offered only to a real that is existentially distinguishable from the Absolute, although it is at the same time supreme within, and immanent throughout, the Absolute. It is this, indeed, that is meant in my opinion by " the Ultimate Reality "—the supreme Reality rather than the all-inclusive ; but quite obviously the two categories here involved are widely different. It is also possible, of course, to affirm that " God is not the Absolute " in the sense that He is completely transcendent of the Absolute, or, again, hostile to it, as in some earlier dualisms or deisms. But this, clearly, is not the position adopted by Professor Webb.

CHAPTER XI

MECHANISM AND BEAUTY. CREATION. FREEDOM

1. My own arguments for the real existence of the supreme self, it will be recalled, are based upon the mechanical nature, or the mechanical aspects of the nature, of the material world. I have not appealed, that is to say, to the content of æsthetic experience except to observe that for a consistent realism all the objects of this experience—beauty, harmony, symmetry, order—are existentially real; this is the familiar principle of the real existence of tertiary qualities. To advance any specific arguments for this realistic position would here be out of place; I shall simply say therefore that I regard it as being well established, and proceed to discuss its bearing upon the present problem with special reference to beauty; for what is true of beauty is likewise true of its allied qualities. The question at issue turns, however, not on the nature or relations of beauty in itself, but once again on the function of natural mechanisms. For it is a familiar fact that at the basis of beauty there always exists a physical mechanism possessing an exquisite delicacy of adjustment, as is at once obvious in the case of colour and sound. But it is not sufficiently recognized, I think, that these indispensable mechanical adjustments, supremely delicate as they ultimately are, are of absolutely vital importance. The popular belief too often is that beauty is the result of happy accident;

even when its production is attributed to genius, this is similarly assumed to operate without the slightest effort and difficulty. But all who are practically acquainted with music or the attainment of colour harmony or architectural symmetry will fully realize how fatal the slightest mechanical maladjustment often proves to be, at least to perfection of finish if not to the cruder effects. Precisely the same holds true of all the beauties of the natural world; these likewise spring from molecular and atomic vibrations of an almost inconceivable rapidity and minuteness, in the same way as the conscious appreciation of this beauty is connected with the delicate mechanisms of the brain. This however does not mean that the vibrations themselves are either identical with, or are transformed into, any tertiary qualities; each category remains precisely what it is, fundamentally different in its character from the other, and yet both somehow inseparably associated together; vibrations are vibrations while beauty is beauty, just as the consciousness of beauty is what it is and is neither of the other two.[1]

But here the problem arises as to the ultimate significance of beauty.[2] I do not intend however to discuss the already familiar arguments which make their appeal to this attribute, but rather to point out that physical mechanism is one thing and beauty quite another. Further, many indispensable mechanisms are anything but beautiful, to such an extent indeed that to render them beautiful would be to impair or even destroy their mechanical efficiency; so that it is easily conceivable that no mechanism whatever need either be itself

[1] The familiar arguments for the subjectivity of beauty rest on the confusion between our appreciation of beauty and its existence.

[2] Together with its allied qualities, as I have observed already.

beautiful, or produce any beauty by its activity. Just as we have already found that the capacity for evolution is absolutely foreign to mechanism purely as mechanism, so it now appears that the production of beauty is not an essential attribute of mechanism simply as such. Mechanism and beauty, in short, inseparably associated though they frequently are, are still wholly different in their respective natures. And yet, in spite of this, it is natural mechanism, infinitely more delicate in its structure than any human mechanism, that lies at the basis of all natural beauty.

But beauty in itself—that is as distinct in its nature from its foundational mechanism—is inseparably united with mind, in the sense that unless some appreciation of it is aroused its existence becomes completely functionless and therefore meaningless. This unison between beauty and consciousness, however, does not imply that beauty cannot *exist* apart from some consciousness; it is not in any degree an application of the Berkeleyan *esse percipi est.* For as I have already insisted, all tertiary qualities possess inherent objective reality; they exist, that is, independently of the presence of any finite apprehending mind.[1] It is therefore not the *existence* of beauty that has here to be considered, but rather its *significance and function*; and its unity with consciousness then consists in the awakening of some emotion within the experience of the observer. In other words, beauty, as the objectively existent quality, arouses a subjective emotional response; and this response, further, is often a factor of supreme importance as regards the

[1] Of course the supreme self always exists; but I have not hitherto based my arguments for its reality upon the existence of beauty. Obviously all that is said here equally applies to ugliness.

onlooker, influencing his attitude and behaviour to an appreciable degree. Only in this way does beauty exercise any function whatever in the universe. Possessing no physical energy, it nevertheless exerts an extremely powerful psychical influence upon and within conscious experience; and this the more effectively the higher is the development of the observing individuality, while at the same time this development itself is continuously furthered by the experience of beauty.

The character of the æsthetic consciousness of the higher animals is, of course, a difficult problem. But in any case it is of a much more rudimentary type than is the æsthetic experience of a cultured person, and this again becomes insignificant when compared with the artistic insight of genius.[1] All this may be summed up by saying that objective beauty, not existentially but functionally, necessarily implies an æsthetic consciousness; and this, again, develops into an extremely potent factor within the inherently emotional aspects of personality.

2. But at this stage this conclusion must be carried still further. For just as autonomous mechanism and continuous evolution are both essential characteristics of the material world, so again is beauty; and yet—in this resembling the capacity for self-evolution—it is never inherent in physical mechanism purely as mechanism. The vault of heaven and the face of earth alike are exquisitely beautiful; but we cannot suppose that this inexhaustible wealth of beauty exists for the appreciation of humanity merely, since both in space and in time

[1] The analogy with moral tertiary qualities—with goodness and nobility, evil and falsity—is obvious. I have merely selected beauty as typical.

its presence extends far beyond man's feeble apprehension; and yet if there exists no mind whatever whose sensitive and responsive capacity is adequate to this universal beauty, it must be wholly functionless and vain. Since then beauty, regarded always as an objectively real quality, implies an appreciative æsthetic experience, the universal existence of beauty must imply a similarly universal mind just as the actuality of physical evolution implies a dominant self.

It must further be observed that the two arguments here employed—one based on the actuality of evolution, and the other on the universality of beauty--are obviously quite distinct in their character and independent of one another in their development and application. Neither is logically necessary to the validity of the other; for beauty might quite conceivably exist in a non-evolving physical world, just as evolution might conceivably proceed in a universe wholly devoid of beauty. And yet both of these attributes, though mutually disparate and independent as they are, imply one and the same logical conclusion—that is the real existence of a universal self, first as dominant and secondly as æsthetic.

It may be objected that all human æsthetic experience depends on our sense organs, and that if these are absent this experience must either cease or fundamentally alter in character. But in the first place, these organs, though undeniably essential, are still subordinate; for fully developed æsthetic appreciation demands a higher cerebral basis also. Nor is it inconceivable that the material world should present somewhat analogous æsthetic aspects to some higher consciousness; on the contrary, there must always exist some kind of direct relation between the physical universe, just as we appre-

hend it, and the supreme self; once more therefore we may safely trust an elevated anthropomorphism. If then these objections are not insuperable, although the grounds for their complete removal must ever transcend human capacity, the independent attainment of an identical result by both methods alike obviously enhances the logical validity of each of the separate arguments. I need add only a reference to the Earl of Balfour's well-known position, in basing his Theism upon the presence of beauty in our world. His entire treatment of the subject, as he himself affirms, is an *argumentum ad hominem*. "It is an individualist appeal to the sentiments and beliefs of individuals. To every reader or hearer it says in effect that, unless he *assumes the reality* of a universe which is spiritually guided, the values, which in his eyes are supreme, must lessen and fade".[1] My own arguments, however, have taken a wholly different direction. For I have endeavoured to avoid altogether any *assumption* of the reality of the supreme self, and to establish its existence solely as the *conclusion* which is logically involved in my survey of all the facts of the situation; and the difference between these two methods of approach is patent. I am not, of course, either criticizing or disparaging the Earl of Balfour's handling of his subject, which is indeed in every respect admirable. But still the mere *assumption* of any principle whatever must always remain to some degree inadequate, except insofar as the consequences of that assumption can be independently supported by other considerations; and this the author of *Theism and Thought* has himself done very effectively. My own employment of beauty, however, as the type of all tertiary qualities, is based not on any

[1] *Theism and Thought*, p. 37; my italics.

individual convictions, but rather on objective phenomena; and it thus constitutes (in my opinion) an independent argument; although when once itself established it finds strong support in my earlier argument from mechanism. If I may venture to compare it with the Earl of Balfour's forcible *argumentum ad hominem*, I may call it—but merely in order to elucidate its logical character—an *argumentum ad universum*.

3. If then all the foregoing principles are logically valid, the reality of the supreme self gains still further confirmation from the unbroken *continuity* of the material universe. The scientific theory of relativity certainly proves the finiteness of this universe; but within these limits, its magnitude, as we have already sufficiently seen, is inconceivable. From the farthest observable star-cluster, asserts Dr. Jeans, light takes a million years to travel to the solar system;[1] and the unfathomable complexity of its structure is on the same scale and of the same order. Yet throughout its entire extent and its whole evolution it is essentially continuous; it is a unified world of mechanisms governed by one body of law and pursuing (as Professor Eddington maintains) one exhaustless course of development.[2] If therefore its evolving mechanism is the manifestation of dominant mind, this uninterrupted continuity is the manifestation of *one* such mind—of one supreme self; and the wholeness and unity of the complex result necessarily involve the singleness of its source.

This appeal to the character of the material world, which is itself regarded as fundamentally, though not exclusively, real, precludes the denial of the existence of

[1] *Nature*, vol. 113, p. 329. He presents additional interesting analogies.

[2] *Cf. ante*, p. 50.

a supreme self in any such form as we find *e.g.* in Dr. McTaggart's presentation of the Absolute. " I think that it will be best to express our result by saying that the Absolute is not God, and, in consequence, that there is no God. This corollary implies that the word God signifies . . . a supreme being, and that no finite differentiation of the Absolute, whatever his power and wisdom, would be entitled to the name ".[1] The term " God ", as the author remarks elsewhere, implies more than " supreme being " ; but it is only with reference to the existence of the " supreme self " that I wish to discuss this position, not, however, on the basis of the general principles of any form of philosophic Idealism, but specifically in its connection with the physical universe.

Dr. McTaggart, then, holds that " nothing can exist but persons—conscious beings, who know, will, and feel . . . nothing exists but persons connected in a unity. Accordingly, whatever exists must either be a conscious person, or a quality belonging to him, or an event happening to him, or . . . one of those relations which connect these persons, and make up their unity. In the latter case, while it does not actually fall within any one person, it involves a quality which does . . . *Esse est percipere* " ;[2] but at the same time (as we have just seen) no person or self whatever can be a supremely dominant self.

This entire standpoint is obviously opposed to my own realism, which regards the physical universe as really existent independently of any human mind ;[3] and to this I would add, when the question arises, independently of any existent mind whatever except the single supreme

[1] *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 94.

[2] *Some Dogmas of Religion*, pp. 251, 252.

[3] For the detailed arguments for this position I may refer once more to *A Theory of Direct Realism*.

self. This conclusion, in accordance with my preceding arguments, rests firstly on the continuity of the entire physical world, and secondly on its capacity for self-evolution—a capacity which, though plainly inherent in that world, cannot at the same time be inherent in mechanism *as* mechanism. Doubtless other selves exist; but our problem concerns the relation between human personality and the universe in which it exists; and this universe comprises, as one of its most patent real constituents, the material world—continuous throughout its inconceivable extent and yet—if we accept the conclusions of scientific relativity—finite. It is, I suppose, undeniable as an abstract formal supposition that other "universes" may exist. But the human mind can never experience these; for nothing, however new and unique it may be, can enter our experience except what is in some way continuous with our universe, since humanity finds there all the conditions of its own being. To discuss the formal suggestion just cited is therefore wholly profitless. Additional "universes"—if indeed the term is in any way admissible—can have no actual relation to human experience; and conversely, everything that is actually related to this experience falls within one universe, which is therefore the Absolute for human thought and for philosophic discussion; and, within this Absolute, the mechanical yet evolving character of the material world logically necessitates the real existence of a single self which is supreme as regards that world and its human inhabitants.

4. Its supremacy, to return from this consideration of Dr. McTaggart's position, is manifested in the self-evolving mechanism of the physical world; and when we further

recall the absolute disparity between the nature of mind and that of material mechanism, the question of the primal origin of the latter irresistibly arises. For the mechanical universe is essentially *self*-evolving; which means that the supreme self, when regarded from this special point of view, is transcendent. Its influence upon the self-developing material world, therefore, cannot be continually exerted in the same sense that the control of the *chauffeur* is incessantly maintained over the car; for obviously, if this were so, the physical world could not be *self*-developing. The supreme activity must rather be compared to the action of the man who fires a torpedo and then leaves it to direct its own course; but no analogy whatever can be wholly satisfactory here, simply because no human mechanism is ever self-evolving.[1] All our analogies alike, however, necessarily imply some starting point, so that we appear compelled to ask the same questions about the initial act of the dominant self upon the material world:—What is its character? When did it occur? But its absolute uniqueness, on the other hand, appears to me to preclude the conceivability of any solution of these problems. For they plainly amount to asking—What is the essential character of the activity of the supreme self within the Absolute?—of the one dominant mind within the whole of reality? and thus to express our problem in terms which undoubtedly have a meaning, but a meaning that nevertheless transcends human comprehension, is at the same time to confess its insolubility.

At the same time this unique action demands its own

[1] The emphasis upon transcendence here must of course be balanced by my earlier treatment of immanence as being equally real.

special name ; and it appears to me that the term Creation is best used in this sense. Creation is thus the primal action or influence of the supreme self upon the self-evolving material universe, which, simply because it is self-*evolving*, is the manifestation of this self as immanent ; as such therefore creation is real, unique, but in the end incomprehensible. For to endeavour to explain it further is to use time, energy, action, force, or any other of its own results, to explain itself, which is plainly impossible because illogical. We may certainly find many helpful analogies, but never anything more ; and the best of these, to my mind, is the operation of artistic genius upon its proper material. For here again every one of its greatest products is unique. It never existed before, and it will never be duplicated, even though it may be excelled.[1] Every great artist, still further, is immanent throughout all his works even while he at the same time transcends them.

The term creation may certainly be applied to other existents besides the physical world—in fact to all reals other than the supreme self ; and such an expansion of its significance is in my own opinion preferable to any limitation such as Professor Pringle-Pattison suggests with special reference to the finite self or soul. " The origin of such centres is, perhaps, the only fact to which we can fitly apply the term creation, for they necessarily import into the universe an element of relative independence and separateness which is not involved in the notion of externality as such ".[2] Externality, again, is characteristic of (or even identical with) " the general system of nature ", which is thus excluded from the

[1] *Cf.* Professor Ward, *The Realm of Ends*, p. 239.

[2] *The Idea of God*, p. 285. He continues : " To understand the process of such creation is necessarily beyond us ".

true sphere of creation "as expressing the essential nature of the divine life"; [1] this nature is best perceived only in the production of selves. But this generation again, as a real process, carries us back to its basis in the self-evolution of the material world; so that to limit the meaning of creation in this way seems to me less satisfactory than its expansion.

5. Finally, the important problem remains of the relation between the activity of the supreme self and the freedom of human personality. This relation is best expressed by recalling the truth that human freedom, while fundamentally real, is nevertheless never absolute—that is, never complete. To begin with, the freedom of each person plainly coexists with, and is therefore at once conditioned by, the equally real freedom of his fellows; and while "conditioned" here means (formally) "limited", it must at the same time be recognized that limitation in itself need not mean opposition, but may just as often mean assistance and furtherance. In actual life, unfortunately, we most often limit the freedom of our neighbours by confining it; but in strict logic it is equally true that we also "limit" it by expanding it; the term "conditioned" therefore is here more adequate than "limited". If now we carry this consideration, obvious as it is in the case of ourselves and our fellows, a little farther, and apply it to the world in which we live, we discover the solution of our general problem. For human freedom is likewise continuously conditioned by its entire environment; but this ultimately means the entire universe, both as physical and as psychical. But again "conditioned", although it very frequently means confined and opposed, does not always nor necessarily

[1] *The Idea of God*, p. 414.

mean this ; still more fundamentally it means furthered and increased.

Here we need think only of a young child in his home, or an older child at school. Again their freedom is real, though as yet only very slightly developed ; and yet the first impression on the mind of nearly every child is that he is constantly hampered and disciplined and suppressed, even while—in every good school and home—the precise contrary is plainly true. Discipline develops his immature freedom into the fuller freedom of the adult ; in being thus conditioned, that is to say, it is being systematically increased and expanded ; nor can this come about in any other way. But exactly the same principle holds true of the whole environment of humanity. For it is in the first place only through the operation and owing to the incessant pressure of this environment that the race has ever progressed, and has thus attained its actual capacity of freedom in thought and action ; while human progress, once again, is itself part of universal evolution. In the sphere of knowledge and thought this truth is at once obvious ; for here no permanent advance is ever possible except in accordance with the " laws of thought ", as they are so often termed. But the " laws of thought " must not be regarded as merely abstract and formal logical principles ; they are rather the true expression or manifestation of the fundamental aspects of reality itself, which in this way incessantly conditions the evolution of human intellective experience so as to render it more self-coherent, self-complete and self-determinative. But no thinker ever dreams of looking upon this " conditioning " of his mental processes as hostile and repressive ; he rather welcomes it as the sole means of all further intellectual advance. Nor again does any true artist

rebel against the fundamental principles of his art, however much he may condemn the ruling conventions of his day; but this he does always in order yet more adequately to express artistic truth; and only so far as he does this will his work survive. But here once again all progress is conditioned, ultimately, by the nature of reality as this manifests itself in the objects and content of æsthetic experience, just as it did in our previous instances of knowledge and science; and exactly the same principles apply to human life as a whole. Freedom of choice and of action therefore is real; for these expressions of personality are determined, in the last resort, by the individual himself and by none other. But at the same time all his actions entail their natural consequences; and these, in the long run, must be determined by the course of universal evolution, no matter how much this may be modified in the case of any one person or social group. For the conditioning environment is never fixed and static, but always exhibits a development having definite tendencies,[1] whose ultimate course can be materially altered by no human action whatever. On the contrary, it is only to the degree that our conduct is maintained in accordance with this universal evolving tendency that it can be carried to permanently successful issues; for apart from this condition all our efforts, truly free though they are in themselves, are foredoomed to failure.

But this principle must not be interpreted as sheer fatalism, in the sense that every human ideal and every course of conduct must without exception fail. Rather must this attitude be completely reversed; for it is only

[1] *Cf.* further on this point, *The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation*, chap. vi, "The Direction of World Development."

actions that consistently oppose the trend of universal evolution that must ultimately fail; all others must succeed, and succeed increasingly, as is at once obvious, once again, in knowledge and in art. It is one and the same principle that operates in these two special departments of experience, and throughout experience as a whole. Only in art, as in knowledge, human desires (in the main) accord with this universal evolution; so that we desire truth just as we desire more and more to attain or express the beautiful; and therefore we willingly seek and pursue the fundamental principles that sustain this evolution, supremely difficult though this so often is; nor, again, does this mean the total absence of falsity, error, or low forms of art. The existence of these is too painfully obvious; but almost equally obvious is their final failure and disappearance. In what we choose to call "practical life", on the other hand, our desires are primarily very much out of accord with the course of world development, while at the same time their intensity is extremely high. Again we are free either to seek the satisfaction of these discordant desires, or to substitute higher and better ideals of action; but it is the latter only that will ever attain permanent success—success, in other words, that is conditioned and sustained by the uninterrupted course of world evolution. If therefore we choose to describe this conditioning influence as "fatalistic" or "predestined", we must recognize that it is always a further *continuance* of this evolution that is "fated" and always the *success* of every action that conduces to it that is "predestined". Throughout the spheres of æsthetic and of intellective experience this truth is obvious; but it is equally obvious, in my opinion, in history and biography. For here we must take into account not only the external consequences of

action, but also the internal reflex effects on the character of the individual.

It is only from this standpoint, further, that we can obtain any finally coherent concept of "goodness". Good actions are those that in any degree definitely advance the course of universal evolution; bad actions are those that oppose and hinder this evolution; and similarly for good and bad persons. Thus "success" is the natural consequence of goodness, but only as it is measured on the highest scale and by the profoundest standards; and it is in this light only that "success" can become the criterion of goodness, alike as "practical", intellective, or æsthetic. To ask whether the Absolute, or the universe, or the supreme self, is "good", and then to answer this question by reference to any current concept of the "good", is surely futile. I do not mean that it is in practice impossible thus to give a definite answer to this enquiry; I mean that any such answer is logically meaningless. For it judges the fundamental standard in terms of a derivative of that standard; which is the same thing as to ask whether the standard yard in London is accurate and then to employ an ordinary yard measure as the test of its accuracy. This however is what we are really doing whenever we select any ideal whatever of goodness, and then say that the universe, or God, or the Absolute, is good or bad according as it conforms, or does not conform, to this selected ideal. The entire method is logically fallacious; for no matter what the selected ideal may be, it is itself the outcome and product of the evolution of the universe, or the manifestation of the Absolute, or the activity of the supreme self, as the case may be. It is this latter therefore that must form the ultimate standard of goodness, not any current concept however high it be. It may be said that this leaves us

with no final standard of good at all. But this is quite obviously true. No ideal that has ever yet been offered is final, if this means that this ideal cannot be further expanded and developed, and this in such a way that it becomes in the end radically transformed. In the entire history of human thought this is patent; and there is no reason whatever to suppose that this incessant development has ceased.

This must not be taken to mean, however, that we possess no standard of goodness whatever, or that all standards alike are equally valueless. On the contrary, it is always possible for each of us to select an ideal as supreme, although it is impossible to obtain universal agreement on the subject; and again the reason for this is plain. For it is simply due to the uninterrupted course of universal evolution developing different ideals under different conditions; and all these alike undergo incessant transformation as evolution proceeds. Every individual therefore, as every age and nation, must have his valid standard of the good; it is the outcome of the interpretation, in any given instance, of the whole of experience; and because of this it is subject to incessant expansion as that experience enlarges. To say therefore that we can attain no final ideal of goodness [1] simply means that the attainment of a yet higher standard is always possible; and the higher these ideals become the more do they approximate to each other; for they all approach more and more nearly to some form of adequate expression of the infinite nature of the Absolute, or of the supreme self; which, seems to me immaterial; for it is, in the end, the expression of the same ultimate principle as regarded from two different points of view.

[1] Or of happiness, or truth, or beauty; the principle involved applies universally.

INDEX

Absolute, 62, 69 *sqq.*, 108, 161 *sqq.*
Absorption, 71 *sqq.*
Anthropomorphism, 168
Art, 31, 37, 41 *sqq.*, 106, 186
Atom, 154

Balfour, 8, 177
Beauty, 172 *sqq.*
Bergson, 86
Bosanquet, 73, 78, 89, 99 *sqq.*
Bradley, 60 *sqq.*, 106 *sqq.*, 165 *sqq.*
Broad, 7

Cabinet, 83
Cause, 152
Creation, 182

Davidson, 7
Deity, 169
Design, 131 *sqq.*
Dominance, 84 *sqq.*, 97 *sqq.*, 151

Eddington, 50
Ego, 58
Einstein, *cf.* Relativity
Evolution, 76, 119, 134 *sqq.*, 151, 162

Freedom, *cf.* Self-determination
Function and Structure, 41, 49

God, 9, 165 *sqq.*, 179
Goodness, 116, 187

Hobhouse, 95
Hobson, 8
Höffding, 47
Hume, 28 *sqq.*, 59, 81

Ideation, 85, 89, 120
Immanence, 108 *sqq.*, 161 *sqq.*
Immortality, 76, 94
Individuality, 73
Individuation, 104 *sqq.*

James, 59, 80
Jeans, 93, 140, 178

Kant, 28, 81

Lotze, 58, 115

Materialism, 151
Matter 139 *sqq.*; evolution, 162
McTaggart, 34, 82, 120, 179
Mechanism, 120 *sqq.*, 146 *sqq.*, 172 *sqq.*; automatic, 136 *sqq.*; evolution, 134 *sqq.*, 156 *sqq.*; ideal, 154
Mind, 46, 142

Naturalism, 146, 151

Personality, *cf.* Selfhood
Pringle-Pattison, 72 *sqq.* 101 *sqq.*

Reality, complexity, 24, 40; continuity, 25; definiteness, 21; dynamic, 26; plasticity, 24
Relativity, 50, 141

Self and universe, 94 *sqq.*, 167 *sqq.*
Self-consciousness, 79 *sqq.*, 97, 118
Self-determination, 102, 109 *sqq.*, 183 *sqq.*
Selfhood, complexity, 55; content, 66; dominance, 84 *sqq.*, 97 *sqq.*, 151; evolution, 76, 119, 151; nature, 32 *sqq.*; unity, 47 *sqq.*
Space-Time, 169
Stout, 59
Structure and Function, 41, 49
Supreme self, 158 *sqq.*

Temple, 7
Time, 168 *sqq.*
Transcendence, 111, 161 *sqq.*
Truth, 89

Unity of self, 47 *sqq.*
Universe, *cf.* Reality, Self.

Webb, 170
Westcott, 7
Whitehead, 49, 58, 99, 141
Whole, *cf.* Absolute

150
120

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